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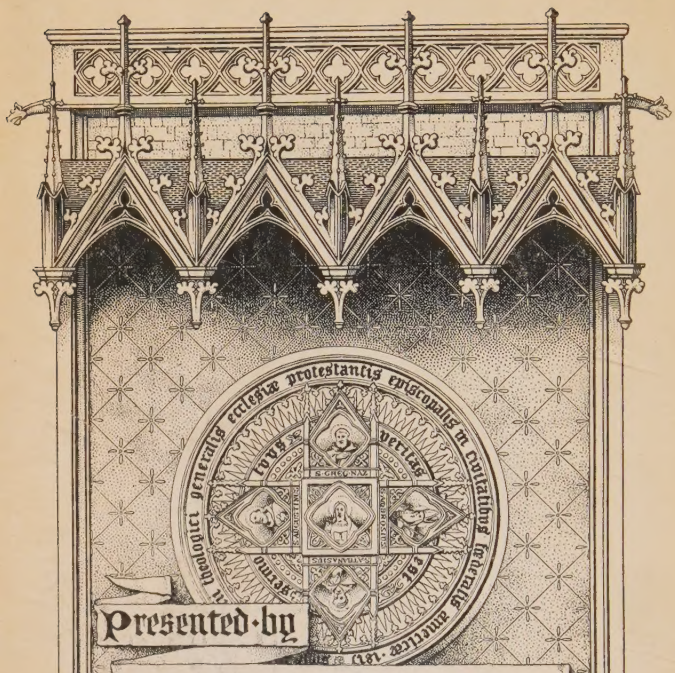
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HELON'S PILGRIMAGE

TO

JERUSALEM:

A

PICTURE OF JUDAISM,

IN THE CENTURY WHICH PRECEDED THE ADVENT OF OUR SAVIOUR.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

FREDERICK STRAUSS.

REVISED AND ABRIDGED

BY BARON STOW,

PASTOR OF THE SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH, BOSTON.

"Salvation is of the Jews."

BOSTON:

WILLIAM D. TICKNOR,

Corner of Washington and School Streets.

1835.

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All that the Editor knows of either the Author or the Translator of the following work, is ascertained from the title-page: "Translated from the German of Frederick Strauss." With the work itself he is familiar, having done what he believes to be uncommon in the case of fictitious narrative — read it the third and even the fourth time with increasing interest. Of this fact no Christian reader will require an explanation.

The design of the work is to exhibit "a picture of the Jewish people, in which their ecclesiastical and civil constitution, their social and domestic life are represented, as they existed at the time when the advent of the Messiah was near at hand."

The plan may be best described in the author's own words:

"A young Jew, who had been enamoured of the prevailing Grecian philosophy, has returned to the observance of the law of his fathers, at one of those important crises in life which decide the character of succeeding periods. Bent on the fulfilment of the law, which he believes it impossible to accomplish any where but in

the place where the altar of Jehovah is fixed, he makes a journey from Alexandria, were he had been brought up, accompanied by his uncle, to Jerusalem, in the spring of the year 109 before the birth of Christ; remains there during the half year which included the principal religious festivals; becomes a priest; enters into the married state; and by the guidance of Providence, and varied experience, attains to the conviction, that peace of mind is only to be found in believing in him who has been promised for the consolation of Israel.

"The plan now traced, while it offered an opportunity of delineating the progress of an interesting change in the sentiments of Helon himself, seemed also to present the means of combining with this a living picture of the customs, opinions, and laws of the Jewish people. No period of their history seemed so well adapted to the design of this work, as that of John Hyrcanus. It is about this time that the books of the Maccabees close; it is the last era of the freedom and independence of the people, whose character and institutions at the same time were so nearly developed and fixed, that very little change took place between this and the time of our Saviour. It was possible, therefore, to give a picture which, as far as relates to usages and manners, should be applicable to the times of the New Testament.

"It was in the last years of the long reign of Hyrcanus that the opposing sects of Sadducees and Pharisees first became conspicuous, and the one hundred and ninth year before the Christian Era is the date of the destruction of Samaria. In the description of the temple, however, I have allowed myself to anticipate a little, in order to describe its magnificence in the days of Herod, whose temple was that to which our

Saviour resorted. In the description of the customs of sacrifice and prayer, I have ventured to use, but with moderation, the accounts of later times.

"It is well known that the want of a lively and distinct picture of those local and national peculiarities which are presented in the Bible, revolts many from the perusal of it, and exposes others to very erroneous conceptions. It is the author's prayer to him, from whom these precious records have proceeded, that the present work may serve, under his blessing, to make the perusal of the Scriptures more attractive and edifying; and he hopes those who shall drink with pleasure from his humble rill, will not be satisfied without going to the fountain of living waters."

A conviction that the work is adapted to accomplish the end thus fervently desired by the author, has induced the Editor to comply with the solicitation of the enterprising publisher by preparing for the public a revised edition. The former edition was published ten years since, in two volumes, and enjoyed with the lovers of novelty its ephemeral popularity, and then was thrown aside into the common oblivion of fictitious productions. But though cast among the perishing, it did not perish, for it had merits, not possessed by its fellow-reprobates — merits which some of its readers had appreciated, and could not forget. These merits consisted, not in the skilful arrangement or the bewitching attractiveness of the fiction — for the story is peculiarly simple and artless — but rather in those accurate and vivid representations of Judaism which admirably

exhibit the system before the mind, *as a whole*, and fix it steadfastly in the memory. Frequent allusion has consequently been made to the work, as furnishing, in a very interesting form, many valuable illustrations of the sacred Scriptures, and inquiries for it, especially of late, have been both frequent and fruitless.*

The present edition purports to be an abridgement. It is so, however, only to a small extent. It was desirable to include all that should be published within a single volume, and the Editor has therefore ventured to expunge occasionally a paragraph or a page which was not essential to the chain of the narrative, or to the accomplishment of the author's main design. In this way the dimensions of the work have been moderately reduced, while everything that is indispensable to its proper excellence or utility has been faithfully retained. A few brief notes have been added in the margin, and occasionally words and parts of sentences, of an explanatory or modifying character, have been introduced into the text.

The English edition, published in 1824, contains nearly a hundred pages of closely printed notes, in the form of an appendix to each volume. These notes, as they throw much light upon numerous points which are barely alluded to in the text, are extremely valuable. But a large proportion of them consist of quotations from other languages, such as

* Theological Professors have often recommended the work to their pupils.

Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and of references to various authors whose works are not within the reach of common readers, and therefore their utility to any except the learned would be very limited. It is consequently considered as injudicious to include them in the present edition, especially as they are too extensive to be incorporated, even one half of them, in this volume, without swelling it to an undue magnitude.

Readers who are desirous of availing themselves to the utmost of the utility of this volume, will not fail to read it with the Bible before them, and to turn in course to all the passages of Scripture to which he will find in almost every page copious references. The poetical quotations from the Old Testament, which are sufficiently liberal, will be found to vary in some respects, in phraseology, from the common version. These variations, so long as they do not essentially affect the sentiment, are unobjectionable. Perhaps to some minds they may be advantageous. Truth, seen through a new medium, often makes a new impression. B. S.

Boston, April, 1835.

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HELON'S PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER I.

ALEXANDRIA.

The whole house was in commotion. The camels were receiving their load in the inner court, and drinking, before their journey, from the fountain beneath the palm trees. The slaves ran this way and that way: in the apartments of the women the maid servants were busily preparing the farewell meal for the son of their mistress, who, while she hurried in different directions and issued her commands, was repeating the words of the forty-second Psalm —

As the hart panteth for the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God!
My soul thirsteth for God,
The living God!
When shall I return
And appear before the face of God!

She had been born in the Holy Land, and her deceased husband had brought her to Egypt. The country in which her youthful days had been spent, and the journeys to Jerusalem, in which she had borne a part, rose up to her remembrance and with overflowing eyes she proceeded:

My tears have been my food day and night,
While they say unto me continually
"Where is thy God?"

The thought of her deceased husband rushed upon her mind, and her tears flowed in a fuller stream. Yet with a lighter heart, and with a less faltering voice, she proceeded:

> When I remember these things, my heart melteth within me;
> How I had gone with the multitude to the house of God,
> How I had gone with the voice of joy and praise,
> With the multitude that kept the festival.

At this moment Helon met her. She embraced him and said, "So once I went to the holy city, but now I must remain a captive in a strange land. All the day long this psalm of the sons of Korah dwells upon my mind. Thy father sang it the last evening that we spent together. Immediately after, he set out for the promised land, and returned no more."

Helon was moved by the distress of his mother. His feelings had been the same as hers, but he was near the accomplishment of his wishes. He was about to visit the holy city, and the grave of his father in the valley of Jehoshaphat; and raising himself from his mother's embrace, he replied, "Hast thou forgotten the thrice repeated chorus of that psalm?

> Why art thou cast down, O my soul,
> And why art thou disquieted within me?
> Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him
> Who is my deliverer and my God."

Sallu, a young Jew, who had been purchased as a servant of her family six years before, now entered the apartment. He was dejected, and anxiously asked Helon, "Wilt thou not take me with thee, master?" The mother replied, "Thou art free; yesterday thy six years expired, and it shall be Helon's last employment before his departure solemnly to emancipate thee." The youth kept his eyes fixed upon Helon as if he was still asking him, "Wilt thou not take me with thee, master?" "Why dost thou refuse thy freedom, Sallu?" said Helon. "Master," replied he, "when thy father bought me, six years ago, I was a houseless, friendless boy. I have been brought up with thee, and if I now must leave thee, I

shall be again without a friend or a home. I will not leave thee: thou art going to Jerusalem, and, if I go not with thee, I shall never behold the altar of my God, nor the place to which I direct my prayers. Take me with thee, and I will be a servant in thy house all my days. I have called the elders, and they will be here immediately."

They endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose. Helon painted to him the value of freedom, and the mercy of Jehovah towards the bondsmen in Israel, in appointing their release in the seventh year. His mother promised him that he should not go forth empty handed; that she would give him "of her flock, and of her barn, and of her winepress, of all in which the Lord her God had blessed her," as the Lord had commanded by Moses in the law.* But Sallu replied, "Nay, but I will remain with thee: it is best for me to be here." The elders had now arrived.

"This youth," said one of them, "will be a servant of thy house. Come together to the gate."

The elders, with Helon, his mother and Sallu, went through the covered way, as far as the gate which opened to the outer court. Sallu stood beside the gate-posts. The elder asked him, "Wilt thou not leave Helon?" Sallu replied, "I will not leave him; for I love him and his house." Then Helon took an awl, and piercing his ears against the door post, made him his servant forever.† The elders pronounced a blessing, and Helon put a ring through the ears of Sallu, as a sign that he was become his property. The youth bounded for joy, and exclaimed, "I have bought thee with my blood. Wilt thou not now take me with thee to the Holy Land?" "Go," said Helon, "to look after the camels, and prepare thyself for the journey."

The mother invited the elders to partake of the farewell supper with her and her son, at which Elisama was also to be present. They consented, and went back with her into the inner court. Helon remained awhile behind, to inspect the

* Deut. xv. 14. † Deut. xv. 16, 17.

preparations for the journey. The slaves were equipping three stately dromedaries, which, young, high spirited, and fleet, deserved the name of "ships of the desert." They had taken a long draught at the well, while the slaves laid in order the baggage which contained the food and clothing of the travellers, and presents for their host in Jerusalem. In the east, the expressions of friendship were made by deeds rather than by words, and the travellers destined for their host* costly caftans,† Egyptian linen, a robe of thread of gold, and some books written on papyrus. The camels, kneeling down, received the burthen on their backs.

Helon's uncle, Elisama, who was to be his guide on the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, arrived, examined the preparations, and appointed to the slaves the hour of departure. Helon and he then went together into the inner court, where the elders were sitting under the palms beside the fountain, and enjoying the refreshing coolness of the evening. This inner court, around whose sides ran a portico and a gallery, was paved with green, white, yellow and black marble. An awning of various colors was stretched over it to shelter it from the burning rays of the sun; and in the middle was the fountain with its lofty palms. In Alexandria, as in the East generally, this was the place for the reception of visitors.

The meal was prepared, and the elders arose from beside the fountain to place themselves on cushions around the table. A venerable man with hoary locks took the place of honor, the middle place, on the middle cushion. The seven-branched lamp shed a bright light around, from its one and twenty flames. The slaves had strewed the table, the cushions and the floor with the flowers of spring. Sallu came with a silver basin, poured water on the hands of the guests, and when he had wiped them, sprinkled on them the fragrant nard. The most delicate productions of fertile Egypt were served up; among which the mother had not forgotten the fish of the

* The person whose hospitality they should enjoy while at Jerusalem.

† A rich Persian outer garment.

Nile, that her son might taste them once more before his departure. Helon lay* before Elisama, or, as it was called in the East, in his bosom.

Elisama, acting as father of the house, blessed the bread. He spread both his hands over it, and said, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, who causest bread to grow out of the earth;" and the rest answered "Amen." As this was an entertainment, the wine also was blessed. Elisama took the cup with both hands, then holding it with the right, at the height of a yard above the table, he praised the Lord and said, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, who hast given unto us the fruit of the vine;" and the rest again replied, "Amen." This done, he repeated the twenty-third psalm:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,
He leadeth me beside the soft flowing waters,
He refresheth my soul,
He leadeth me in the straight path
For his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff comfort me.
Thou preparest a table for me
In the presence of mine enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy follow me all my life;
I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

This was the prayer with which the festive meal was usually hallowed in Israel. The guests helped themselves and enjoyed the feast. When the last dish was removed, Elisama began: "It is long since I repeated that beautiful psalm, with such a feeling of devotion as today. One might think that it had been written expressly for the feast on the evening before our departure for the Holy Land. 'Happy the people that know the sound of the trumpet!'"

* *Lay* — leaned or reclined according to the eastern custom.

Helon's kindling glance thanked Elisama for thus expressing the sentiment of which his own heart was full. But one of the elders replied, "The sound of the trumpet is heard also in Leontopolis, and the psalm might be repeated with equal propriety, before a journey to the nome* of Heliopolis."

"I always maintain," said Elisama, "that Israel is Israel nowhere but in the Holy Land."

"But does not the law itself declare," said the elder, "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land?† Did not the patriarchs of our nation always repair to Egypt in their distress, and did not the land of Ham almost always show a brotherly compassion for the children of Shem? Why did our forefathers always resort to this land of wonders, rather than to Syria or Mesopotamia? Does it not appear as if some secret guiding of Providence had always impelled Israel to unite himself with his brethren of Mizraim? Was not our father Abraham himself in Egypt?" "And well did Pharaoh reward him by his treatment of Sarah," interrupted Elisama. "Jehovah himself forbad Isaac to go down to Egypt."‡

"Yet," replied the elder, "Jacob came hither with seventy souls; Joseph was proclaimed the father of the land, and Pharaoh said to him, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in the land of Egypt.§ Moses was born here and brought up at court, and Jeremiah also was here.‖ When Alexander founded this city, he brought a multitude of our nation hither; the first Ptolemy settled a hundred thousand of them in different parts of the land, and because the kings thought us to be the brethren of the Egyptians, we have obtained the privileges of the highest rank of citizens, and are called, like the conquerors themselves, Macedonians. The Lord has moved the heart of the king and queen, and Onias, the son of Onias, has built us a temple in Leontopolis, which is an exact copy of that on

* *Nome* — province, or territorial division.

† Deut. xxiii. 7.

‡ Gen. xxvi. 2.

§ Gen. xli. 44.

‖ Jer. xlii.

Mount Moriah. Soon shall we be still more highly exalted. You know that let the schemes of Ptolemy Lathyrus be what they may, his mother Cleopatra, who is joint regent with him, has the administration in her hands, and by her means (a thing unheard of in any other country) two of our nation, Hilkias and Ananias, the sons of Onias, are at the head of the army."

"The God of Israel bless Cleopatra our queen! May he increase her a thousand fold, and cause her seed to possess the gate of their enemies," exclaimed the elders.

"What thou hast said of our fathers, and of their journeys into Egypt is true; but acknowledge also," said Elisama, "that they never failed to return to the Holy Land, when they had an opportunity; and we will do the same."

"No," said the elder, "we have our own temple in Egypt, our Oneion."

"But," said Elisama, "it is contrary to the law of the Lord; on Moriah only should the temple and the altar stand. Jehovah spoke to Moses saying,* 'To the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither shall ye come, and thither shall ye bring your burnt-offerings: but take heed that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in any place that thou seest; in the place which the Lord shall choose there shalt thou offer thy burnt-offerings, and do all that the Lord thy God requires of thee.' And five hundred years after, when the temple was built, he said to Solomon, when he appeared to him in the night, 'I have heard thy prayer and have chosen this place to myself, as a house of sacrifice.'† And this place is Moriah, where Abraham was about to offer up his own son."

"Knowest thou not," continued the elder, "what Isaiah, the greatest of all the prophets, said two hundred years later? Our high priest wrote the passage to the king and queen at the building of the Oneion. 'In that day shall five cities in

* Deut. xii. 1—14. † 2 Chron. vii. 12.

the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan and swear to the Lord of Hosts: one shall be called Irhaheres,' that is Leontopolis."*

Elisama replied, "I adhere to the words of the psalm, 'The Lord hath chosen Zion and delights to dwell therein.'† To Isaiah also the Lord spoke, saying, 'I will comfort you as one whom his mother comforteth, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.'‡ We might say to you of Alexandria what the Lord said by the mouth of Jeremiah, 'Go up into Gilead and take balm, O virgin daughter of Egypt!'"§

"Yet Jehovah, in the same chapter calls Egypt a fair heifer."

"True, but he threatens her; 'destruction cometh from the north,' and in us will his word be fulfilled, 'ye shall be ashamed of Egypt as thou was ashamed of Assyria.'"‖

"Now accursed be he who reviles the Oneion, the temple of the Lord, and Egypt and the qeeen," exclaimed the elder, in vehement indignation. They had long ceased to eat, as their conversation became more animated, and sat upright upon their cushions. The elder started on his feet, and seemed about to offer some violence to Elisama; but a gray-headed elder, who had hitherto only listened, interposed between them, and with the calmness of age said to them both, "Peace, my children! There is enough of strife in Israel; let not us increase it. Do thou remain in Egypt, and thou, Elisama, take thy way to Jerusalem. The Messiah cometh and will teach us all things."

The mother entered the room. "What sayest thou, dejected mother in Israel," continued the aged man. "She could not," she said, "divest herself of the fear that one of the travellers would never return. So it had been six years before. Her only comfort was, that her deceased husband had been buried in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and nothing would have induced her to consent to Helon's departure, but

* Is. xix. 18. † Ps. cxxxii 13. ‡ Is. lxvi. 13.
§ Jer. xlvi. 11, 20. ‖ Jer. ii. 36.

the thought that he would visit his father's grave. Ye all knew him," said she, turning to the guests, "he was a stay of Israel in a foreign land."

The elders turned to Helon and said, "Blessed be thou, for thou art the son of an upright man, and one that feared God." "As to thy apprehension that one of us may not return," said Elisama, "let us rather hope, that we shall bring back with us a new member of the family, a future mother, either from Jericho or from Anathoth."

The mother smiled, with a significant look, which seemed to say that she already knew more of this matter. The elder, who had scarcely recovered from his passion, seemed not well pleased that the number of Aramæan Jews in Alexandria should be increased. Helon blushed, and observed the modest silence which became a youth in Israel, in the presence of his elders.

"Of the two," said the old man, "thou wouldst rather receive thy new relation from Anathoth." "True," she replied, "many of our friends live there, and there the holy prophet Jeremiah was born." The mention of Jeremiah was sufficient to kindle Elisama. His forefathers had accompanied the prophet, when, after Ishmael's outrage upon Gedaliah,* he was carried into Egypt, by the people who feared the vengeance of the king of Babylon; and he had sojourned with this family. "While there lives one of our race," exclaimed Elisama, "never shall it be forgotten by us that we once entertained a prophet of the Lord. His writings are our favorite study, and by them we are directed to seek the Holy Land."

The discourse assumed a more cheerful character. The last cup was emptied. Sallu washed the hands of the guests, and sprinkled them with fragrant oil. Elisama pronounced the thanksgiving, and the old man rising up, took Helon's hand and said, "Farewell, and take with thee my blessing." Then, laying his hands upon the young man's head, he said —

* Jer. xli. xlii. xliii.

"He that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.
May Jehovah be thy keeper, thy shade on thy right hand.
May Jehovah preserve thy going out and coming in,
From this time forth and for evermore." — Ps. cxxi.

The other elders also blessed him, but it was evident that they would have done it with a more hearty good will, if he had been going to Leontopolis. All the guests took leave, and returned to their respective abodes.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEPARTURE.

It was late in the evening: the slaves extinguished the seven-branched lamp and laid the cushions for beds in the porticoes which surrounded the inner court. All retired speedily to rest, that they might set out the earlier on the following morning. But the mother still lingered on the spot; her grief increased as the time of departure drew nigh; weeping she embraced her child, and said, "Call me Marah, for I am a sorrowful mother in Israel." Helon in silence leaned upon her bosom, till Elisama came, and said to her: "Bethink thee of what our prophet saith,* 'Rachel weepeth for her children and refuseth to be comforted. But thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eye from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded and thy children shall come again to their own border.'" He forced her away into the inner apartments, and himself lay down on one of the cushions in the portico.

Helon did not attempt to sleep. Wishing his uncle calm repose, he ascended the roof of the house where stood the *Alijah*, a small apartment like a turret, dedicated to secret

* Jer. xxxi. 15.

meditation and prayer. From the roof there was an extensive view over the city of Alexandria; on the north to the Mediterranean, on the south to the lake Mareotis, and on the east to the Nile and the Delta. Here he had often stood when a boy, and with restless longing had looked towards the Holy Land. It was a clear, calm night of spring. Refreshing odors arose from the surrounding gardens. The countless stars shed down their twinkling radiance upon him, and the moon's new light was mirrored in the lake and the canals of the Nile.

Before him lay the city of Alexander, justly styled, in the days of her highest prosperity, the Queen of the East and the Chief of Cities. In what stillness she now reposed, with her towering obelisks! How deep the silence and the rest which wrapt her six hundred thousand inhabitants, and her five harbors, by day so full of activity and noise! The house was near the Panium, from which the whole city could be seen at one view. There stood the Bruchium, which, besides the royal palace, contained the Museum, rendered the chief seat of the learning of the times, by its library of four hundred thousand volumes, and by being the residence of the learned men, whom the munificence of the Ptolemies had collected around their court. Here Helon had sat for several years, at the feet of the philosophers. He thought on those years, and, as he compared them with his present hopes, he exclaimed:

> Better is a day in thy courts than a thousand!
> I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord
> Than dwell in the tents of sin.—Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

"Truly the tents of sin," said he to himself, as he paced the roof, "even when I think on my own people, who live here in high favor. Let them be called Macedonians if they will; let the sons of the high priest be the commanders of the army; let them hope for still greater distinctions from Cleopatra's favor; it is still an exile, and Israel is in affliction. Their schisms in doctrine and laxity of morals are too plain a proof of it."

He went into the Alijah, and brought out his harp: the plaintive notes resounded through the still air of night as he sung,

By the rivers of Babel we sat and wept
When we thought on Zion.
We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.—Ps. cxxxvii.

"Here we ought to hang them upon the pyramids," continued he. "The controversy which destroyed the harmony of our social meal this evening still jars upon my soul. Praised be God that Jeremiah sojourned with my forefathers, that they like myself have continued Aramæan Jews, and have not gone over to the Hellenists."

The Diaspora, or body of the Jews dispersed in foreign countries, was divided at this time into Hellenists and Aramæan Jews. The Hellenists had adopted the Greek, at that time the universal language of the civilized and literary world; the Aramæan Jews used, in foreign lands, the Hebrew, or rather a dialect of that language, called the Aramæan. The latter attached themselves to the temple at Jerusalem, the former worshipped at Leontopolis in Egypt. A division once begun is easily extended to other points. With the Greek language the Hellenists had adopted Grecian culture, yet wished still to continue Jews, and hence arose the necessity for uniting philosophy with the law. The only way in which this could be accomplished, was that which they adopted, of attributing the doctrines of Grecian wisdom to the law, as its inward and spiritual meaning. In this undertaking the Egyptians had led the way for them. Egypt is the native country of allegories. For a long time past the popular religion had been very different from that of the sacerdotal caste, and they stood to each other in the relation of the letter to the spirit; of the image to the reality. The Hellenistic Jews had adopted this Egyptian mode, and three classes had been formed amongst them. One party openly renounced both law and allegory, living without the law, which indeed it was impossible to observe exactly anywhere

but in Judea. Another outwardly conformed to the law, but did so for the sake of its hidden and spiritual meaning. A third set were contented with this spiritual meaning, which they arbitrarily annexed to it, and concerned themselves no further with the literal observance. No little confusion had arisen from this variety of opinions, and the incessant controversies to which they gave rise.

Helon had been hurried by the prevailing spirit of his age and country for some years into the vortex of allegory. A youth of such an ardent temperament and high intellectual endowments, connected with the most considerable families of the Alexandrian Jews, could scarcely escape this temptation. Had his father been alive, he would have been a constant monitor to him against the danger — but since his death on the journey to the Holy Land, Helon's danger had increased, with the increase of his liberty. It seems too, as if it were necessary that those master spirits, who are destined successfully to oppose the errors of their times, should themselves for a while be involved in them. The scattered intimations which the law itself affords opened to him a new and attractive field which he was eager to explore completely. He was advised to make himself acquainted with the Grecian philosophy, as the source of the knowledge which he desired, and for this purpose he resorted to the Museum. His first instructor here was a Stoic, who demanded from him a greater rigor than even the law had required, but at the same time taught him, that the knowledge of God was not necessary. Helon forsook him, and applied himself to an acute Peripatetic; but his thoughts seemed more occupied with his pecuniary remuneration, than with the high rewards of wisdom and philosophy. Helon lost no time in seeking another teacher. A Pythagorean required, as a preliminary, a long study of music, astronomy and geometry, and Helon thought that the knowledge of the truth might surely be obtained by a less circuitous process. At last a young and lively Greek, of the name of Myron, whom he had known as a child, introduced him to a Platonic philosopher. In him he seemed to have found all

of which he had been in search. He perused with Myron the dialogues of him whom his disciples called *the divine.* Those were hours never to be forgotten, in which his doctrine of reminiscences, of virtue that is not to be taught or learned, of That which is, first irradiated his mind. About this time he became acquainted with a wise Jew, who was also a Platonist, and profoundly skilled in the interpretation of the law. He could answer every question which Helon wished to ask, respecting the sense of scripture. He explained to him the seven days of creation, and the ten commandments, in their spiritual import; and taught him much respecting the world of ideas, which he had not found even in Plato. His new teacher represented the divine intelligence, not as an attribute of God, but as a being having a distinct existence, and called it the image of God, his first born son, the highest of the angels and the primeval man.

For a long time his fancy rioted in these speculations, to which he was so entirely devoted, that if he continued to observe the law, it was owing to the pure and simple manners to which he was accustomed in his father's family. But every thing which only gratifies the understanding loses its charm, especially with men of lively and ardent temperament, when it loses its novelty. When Helon's first transport at the enlargement of his views had subsided, and cool reflection began to resume her sway; when he perceived that Myron could, with equal ease, explain and vindicate the worship of Jupiter, Bacchus and Apollo—the Orphic and Dionysian mysteries—and all the idolatries of polytheism, by the aid of the same principles which his teacher had applied to the interpretation of scripture; suspicions were awakened in his mind that these principles could not be true. That which converts falsehood into truth, he thought, can never increase the force and evidence of truth. The promises which were given to Israel, the threatenings and warnings of Jehovah against participation in idolatry, recurred to his mind. The image of his deceased father was daily held up to him by his mother, as one who had abhorred the system of the Heneljists. A

feeling of pride in his own nation as the chosen people of Jehovah, was awakened in his bosom, and he could no longer take pleasure in the society of Myron.

He began now to remark the endless varieties and inconsistencies of these allegorical interpretations. Every one, full of the persuasion of his own wisdom, expounded the divine word according to his own fancy. Helon could not but perceive that all this wisdom was an arbitrary, self-invented, human system of doctrine respecting divine things, in opposition to which, not only Plato but the whole tenor of scripture taught him, that God only can be our instructer in things relating to himself, and that human reason must here rely upon revelation. This revelation he found in the law delivered to his nation upon mount Sinai, under circumstances the most impressive and sublime. While this train of thought, tended to alienate him from the Hellenists and their system, his mother one evening remarked to him with sorrow his slowness in fulfilling the divine precepts. At first he was so much offended by it, that he replied to her remonstrances only by a sarcastic look, and retired to his books. But conscience did not allow him to rest. Suddenly the divine denunciation occurred to him, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."* He was deeply moved, and now saw with opened eyes the abyss of immorality, to the edge of which his new wisdom had conducted him. He had long desired to be free from the burthensome duties of the law, and he had now transgressed against the first commandment with promise. He felt to what this heathen philosophy, this partial culture of the mind, was bringing him; and in the lives of its professors he saw, in all their rank maturity, the vices, of which he discovered the seeds in his own heart. They lived without a law, sunk in heathen vice and immorality. He now perceived that nothing but the most faithful obedience to the law could make him truly happy,

* Prov. xxx. 17.

that in this way only he became a partaker in the promises of God to the upright, and that the passion for allegories had corrupted his mind instead of enlightening it. These reflections determined him to return to the faith of his fathers.

He now felt himself once more at home under his paternal roof; his former filial reverence for his mother returned; his father's spirit seemed to smile on his conversion; and the experienced counsels of his uncle proved much more than an equivalent to him for all the wisdom of the Museum. All the joys and the longings of his childhood returned upon him; the feelings of the present moment seemed to be linked immediately to the remembrances of his boyish days, and all that had intervened appeared like a period of delusion. His desire to behold Jerusalem came over him again, in all its original vividness; it had been the strongest of his early feelings, and the very names of Canaan, Zion and Jerusalem had held a mysterious sway over his imagination. His mother, as he sat upon her knees, had told him of the place, towards which he was taught to lisp his prayer; of the thousands who went up to the feast; of Moses, David and Solomon; and had represented Egypt as a land of exile, as another Babel, in comparison with the land of his fathers. He often saw her weep when she spoke of Jericho and her native city, and related how she, when a maiden, had gone up in the choir of singers to the festival, but must now remain in a strange land. As the severest punishment for his childish offences, he used to be told, that it would be a long time before he would be fit to accompany his father on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; and the reward of his proficiency and his obedience was the promise of a sight of Jerusalem. When Jews from the holy city visited Alexandria, and, as their custom was, came to see his father, it was a festival for Helon; he regarded these strangers with scarcely less veneration than his fathers had done Jeremiah, and tried all the insinuating arts of which he was possessed, to induce the most courteous among them to tell him something about the land of his ancestors. It was the land of promise, the theme of sacred song, the theatre of

sacred history. When his father was in a cheerful mood, he used to relate anecdotes of his pilgrimages, beginning and ending every narrative with the words of the children of Korah:

> The Lord loveth the gates of Zion,
> Whose foundation is in the holy mountains;
> More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
> Glorious is it to speak of thee,
> O city of God!—Ps. lxxxvii.

The journey from which his father never returned, was to have been the last which he made alone—on the next Helon was to have accompanied him. His grief at being obliged to remain at home, his mother's tears, his father's solemn farewell, as it were prophetic of the fatal event; his mother's daily remarks, "Now they are in Hebron; today they will reach Jerusalem; today the passover begins; today it will be over;" their joyful expectations of his return, and the overwhelming intelligence of his death, had all combined to leave an impression on his mind, which he had with difficulty mastered for a time, and which now revived with uncontrolable force. Since his return to the law of his fathers, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem had been his dream by night and his thought by day. Leontopolis, the character and proceedings of the Hellenists, and even the conversation at this evening's entertainment, all conspired to convince him, that Egypt was no place for the fulfilment of the law. It was now the predominant wish of his soul to become a true Israelite, a faithful follower of the law, and a worthy member of the people of the Lord, and he felt that only in the Holy Land could he become so.

All these reflections and retrospects of his past life filled the mind of Helon as he laid down his harp upon the parapet of the roof, and paced up and down in strong emotion. At times he stopped, and fixing his eyes on the northeast, almost persuaded himself that the clouds which he saw there were the hills of Judah. In the mean time Sallu, who, like his master, had been unable to sleep, had silently placed a lamp

in the Alijah. Helon was attracted by the light and went in. A roll lay unfolded; he looked into it, and opened at the splendid description which an exile at Nineveh, of the tribe of Naphthali, makes of the holy city. "O Jerusalem, the holy city! Many nations shall come from far to the name of the Lord God, with gifts in their hands. Blessed are they that love thee, and rejoice in thy peace. Let my soul bless God, the great King: for the Lord our God will deliver Jerusalem from all her afflictions. The gates of Jerusalem shall be built of sapphires and emeralds and precious stones; thy towers and battlements of pure gold; and the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with white marble, and in all her streets shall they say, Hallelujah! Praised be God who hath exalted her, and may his kingdom endure forever. Amen."*

"Hallelujah," he exclaimed, "that before me an Egyptian Jew could put such words into the mouth of a captive at Nineveh." He hastened to his harp, and placing the footstool under his foot, turned towards the Holy Land as he sung,

> O Jehovah, thou art my God, early will I seek thee.
> My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,
> In a dry and thirsty land.
> Would that I might see thy sanctuary,
> To behold thy power and glory.—Ps. lxiii.

He knew by heart all the psalms which had any relation to Jerusalem, and no sooner had he finished one, than his fingers and his voice, unbidden, began another.

> When Israel went out of Egypt,
> The house of Jacob from a people of strange language,
> Judah was his sanctuary,
> Israel his dominion.—Ps. cxiv.

His own pilgrimage to Jerusalem seemed to him like the departure of Israel from Egypt fourteen hundred years before, and he was transported at once to those remote ages with so lively a feeling, that the psalm seemed to him to spring fresh

* Tobit x.

from his own soul, and to have been dictated by his own emotions. The forty-third psalm occurred to his mind, and with the raised look, but subdued voice of humble devotion, he sung—

Send out thy light and thy truth and let them guide me!
Let them bring me to thy holy hill and to thy tabernacle!
Then will I go unto the altar of God,
Unto God my exceeding joy.
Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee,
O God, my God!
Why art thou cast down, O my soul,
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall yet praise him
Who is the health of my countenance and my God.

The tones of the harp gradually died away, and Helon remained absorbed in gratitude and devotion towards Jehovah.

At length he arose to perform his evening prayer. Since his return to the law of his fathers, he had been rigid in the performance of this duty, and without discriminating accurately, in the fervor of his new zeal, between the commands of God, and the usages established by tradition, he would gladly even have added to their length and frequency. There was at this time a distinction commonly made among the Aramæan Jews between the *righteous* man, who only aimed to fulfil the law as it was left by Moses; and the *pious* man, who, not content with this, endeavored by the performance of other ordinances to attain a still higher degree of divine favor. At an earlier period of Helon's life, it would have seemed to him a superfluous trouble, to endeavor to deserve the character of the righteous man; now, nothing could satisfy him, but to aspire to the rank of a pious man.

The washing of the hands preceded prayer, because nothing impure was to appear before the purest of beings. Helon next covered his head with his mantle, a sort of talith. This mantle had at the four corners fringes, which were called zizis, consisting of eight double twisted threads of wool, whose azure color had a reference to the heavens, with five tassels,

for the five books of the law. The use of these fringes had been commanded by God himself to the children of Israel, "That they might look upon them and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and seek not after their own heart and their own eyes."* He next bound the phylacteries, called tephillim, on his forehead and left arm, in such a way, that the strings of the first hung upon his breast, and the latter were wound seven times round the fore-arm, then across the fore-finger and the thumb, and finally three times round the middle finger. These phylacteries were little cases, containing strips of parchment, on which the following sentences of the law were written: Deut. v. 11, 13—21; Exod. xiii. 11—16; Deut. vi. 4—9; and Exod. xiii. 1—10; of which the Lord had commanded, "They shall be for a token upon thine hand and for frontlets between thine eyes."† In the phylactery for the forehead there were four strips, in that for the left arm only one.

He now placed himself with his face towards Jerusalem, and prayed the *Kri-schma,* a prayer which consisted of these three passages from the books of Moses; Deut. vi. 4—9, in which it commanded to love and honor God alone; Deut. xi. 13—21, where the promises are given for the fulfilling of the law; and Numb. xv. 37—41, where it is required that the commandments be diligently kept. He concluded all with a prayer to God, as being, in every act of religious worship, the beginning and the end, the centre to which everything tends.

Having performed his devotions, he descended with a cheerful heart from the roof, and laid himself beside Elisama in the portico. At the first cock-crowing he arose; for strengthened and animated by hope, he had little need of sleep.

He went first to the Alijah, and having repeated the ceremonies of the preceding evening, and again concluded with an act of praise to God, he roused the slaves and bade them

* Num. xv. 38. † Deut. vi. 8.

lead the laden camels to the gate. His mother came, with eyes red with weeping, from the apartment of the women. The sun was rising at that moment, and Elisama, approaching her, tried to console her with the words of the eighty-fourth psalm:

The Lord God is a sun and shield,
The Lord will give grace and glory;
No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;
O Lord of Hosts,
Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee!

"Yes," she exclaimed,

Turn thee unto me and have mercy upon me,
For I am desolate and afflicted.

The travellers were invited to take some food, but Elisama declared that only the servant in Israel took food early in the morning, and to others it was a disgrace. The mother, however, was not to be dissuaded, and compelled them to take dates, figs and honey. "Greet thy father's grave," said she to Helon. "Let thy first visit be to the valley of Jehoshaphat."

Sallu led out the camels. He was full of joy, and every moment touched his ear-ring as a badge of honor. The mother embraced her son, and weeping, said to him,

The Lord bless thee and keep thee!
The Lord make his face to shine upon thee
And be gracious unto thee!
The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee
And give thee peace!

"Go, then," she exclaimed; "God be with thee on the way, and his angel lead thee."

Helon tore himself from her, and, accompanied by his uncle, descended the inner court. He had scarcely reached the outer, before the delightful expectation of visiting Jerusalem had already gained the ascendency in his thoughts over the sorrow of departure. And when from the end of the street

he had cast back a look on the parental house, and blessed once more his mother and the Alijah, he proceeded with alacrity on his way, repeating to himself,

> Blessed is the man who puts his confidence in thee,
> And thinks of the way to Jerusalem.

No farewell to home is ever less painful than the first.

CHAPTER III.

THE CARAVAN.

The slaves halted before the gate with the camels and the horses. The camels bore the travelling equipage, provisions, clothes, and presents for the hosts. Sallu when weary was to find a seat upon the one which was most lightly loaded. Elisama and Helon mounted two stately Egyptian horses, which they designed to sell again at Gaza. Egypt abounds with beautiful horses, and supplies the neighboring country with them.

They had arranged their journey so well, that, by joining a Tyrian caravan from Pelusium to Gaza, they would be able to arrive in Judea time enough to accompany the pilgrims from Hebron on their way to Jerusalem. From Alexandria to Pelusium, their road lay through Egypt, and they might venture to make it alone.

Alexandria lies upon a tongue of land, between the Mediterranean sea on the north, and the lake Mareotis on the south. Their journey at first lay between these two, affording them views first of one and then of the other. The shore of the lake was covered with palm trees and papyrus, canals united it with the Nile, and splendid buildings rose on every side of it. Helon, in spite of his longing for the Holy Land, was compelled to confess that Alexander had chosen a spot to bear

his name, not only pre-eminently convenient for trade, but deligh tfully situated.

The places through which they passed, being well known to both our travellers, offered nothing to divert the course of their thoughts. They halted one day, because it was the Sabbath, on which the law does not permit them to travel more than a thousand paces.* The whole journey lasted nine days, in the course of which they ferried over several branches of the Nile, crossing both the great and the little Delta. They passed through Naucratis, celebrated for several centuries past, as the first emporium of Grecian commerce with Egypt; Sais, with its temple of Neitha; Busiris, with the ruins of the largest temple of Isis in Egypt; and Tanis, anciently the royal residence. This land of wonders, however, had little other effect upon Helon, than to make him often repeat —

> Blessed is the man who puts his confidence in thee,
> And thinks of the way to Jerusalem.

His uncle sometimes smiled at him, and observed that it was well that they had left the elder behind at Alexandria. For the rest but little conversation passed. Elisama was wearied by the journey, and Helon and Sallu were silent, or repeated passages from the psalms.

At length they came in sight of Pelusium, where they were to meet the Phœnician caravan; and Helon rejoiced that he should leave the country of the grave and gloomy Egyptians, to penetrate into the desert that conducted him to the land of his forefathers.

As they made a circuit round the city, they saw outside one of the gates a promiscuous assemblage of men, goods, camels and horses. The neighing of the Egyptian and Arabian steeds pierced through the hoarser cry of the camels. Egyptians, Phœnicians, Syrians, Romans, and swarthy Ethiopians, were hurrying in every direction, between the piled up heaps of merchandise; Greek, Aramaic, and Latin were blended in one confused murmur. The main part of the

* A Sabbath day's journey was about equal to an English mile.

caravan consisted of Phœnicians from Tyre, who, according to the custom which then prevailed, had carried wine in earthen jars to Egypt, where little wine was produced. They had gone through Alexandria to Memphis, and as they passed Elisama had agreed with them to be conducted from Pelusium to Gaza. They had just arrived from Memphis, and this was the rendezvous for all who wished to accompany them in their journey through the desert. They had purchased to carry back with them, horses, cotton and embroidered cloths, and the fine and costly linen of Egypt. The leader of the caravan, busied with a variety of cares, briefly saluted Elisama and Helon, and informed them that he should depart on the following morning at daybreak, and that the camels should be arranged four and four. Half the inhabitants of Pelusium had come out, to traffic or to gaze, and the tumult and bustle were indescribable.

While Elisama and Helon endeavored to find themselves a suitable lodging-place for the night, in the marshy land around this city, which borders on the vast sandy desert of Arabia, and Sallu was following them with the slaves, a well-known voice exclaimed, "Welcome, Elisama and Helon! Are ye also for Tyre?" It was Myron, the young and handsome Greek from Alexandria, Helon's early friend, who had introduced him to the knowledge of Platonism, and studied Plato with him in the Museum. Since his return to the law, Helon had purposely avoided him, and would willingly not have encountered him here, just as he was entering on his journey to Jerusalem. Myron was going to Damascus, and meant to accompany the caravan to Tyre; and although they told him that their intention was only to go as far as Gaza, this did not prevent his offering to join company with them to that place; and he made this proposal with so much of Greek urbanity, that they knew not how to refuse. The pleasure of their society, he said, would save him from dying of tedium; which, if he kept company any longer with the Phœnicians, who could talk of nothing but their merchandise, threatened to be more fatal than thirst to him in crossing the desert. "Your oriental

gravity," said he, "will be enlivened by my Grecian levity, and together we shall form the most agreeable party in the whole caravan." He took the hand of Elisama with a smile, and the bargain was concluded.

Long before sunrise on the following morning, the tumult of the caravan began again. Helon's camel was bound behind the three camels of Elisama; Sallu led them, the slaves urged them on, and the three travellers mounted their horses. The trumpet sounded a second time, as the signal of departure. The camels were arranged four together, and our party endeavored to place themselves as near as possible to the head of the line of march, to avoid the clouds of sand which were raised in the middle and near the end. Between every fifty parties, came a horse with a guide, and a man bearing a kettle of pitch, raised on a pole, which was to be kindled during the night. The principal guide, who had the superintendence of the whole caravan, rode usually in front, on a horse richly caparisoned, and accompanied by a camel which carried his treasure. He was the absolute master of the whole train; at his nod the blasts of the trumpet were given, and every one set forward or halted. A litter was borne behind him, in which he occasionally reposed.

It was an hour after sunrise before all was arranged, and the third blast of the trumpet was given. The guide mounted his Arabian horse, and the march began. Thousands of persons from Pelusium and the neighborhood, stood by the road side, and saluted them as they departed. The slaves began to sing, and the bells on the necks and feet of the camels chimed between. Everything in the caravan was performed in measured time, the step of the camels, the jingling of the bells, and the song of the slaves. Both men and beasts were full of alacrity; and thus, even in the desert, one portion of the dreary way after another is performed without tediousness.

Helon's heart beat high with the thought that he had entered on the road to Jerusalem: and he could not refrain from exclaiming, when the signal for the march was given, "Happy are the people that know the sound of the trumpet." To

Myron his exclamation was unintelligible, and he continued to exercise his Attic raillery upon everything around him; but Helon was too much absorbed in his own thoughts to notice him.

The first day's journey, as is usual with caravans, was very short; and they halted, after a march of an hour and a half, at Gerrha, where there was a fountain, by which they encamped. All the press and tumult were renewed. The beasts and merchandise were placed in the middle, and tents were erected all around, as a shelter from the burning heat of noon Myron's slave went to fetch wood and water; Sallu unpacked the travelling equipage from the camel, and the three travellers helped him to set up the tent. He then spread a carpet, on which Elisama seated himself; coverlets and mattresses were brought out for sleeping; and a round piece of leather, having rings at the circumference, which can be drawn together like a purse by a string which runs through them. This was to be laid on the ground before the meat, that the dishes might be placed upon it. The slave had brought the wood — a fire was made in the sand, and the camp kettle placed upon it.

While Sallu and the slave were preparing the meal, Helon and Myron joined Elisama in the tent. Myron's slave brought in a hare, which he had purchased of an inhabitant of Pelusium, and was about to dress it. Elisama observed it, and joined with Sallu, who thrust the slave away, exclaiming, "that the animal was unclean, and must not be dressed for food for his masters."

"Nay, what is this?" said Myron; "the game is excellent, and I meant it to do honor to my introduction into your society."

"We may not eat of it," replied Elisama; it is unclean. It is forbidden in the law to eat any animal, which ruminates without dividing the hoof."*

"Ye are then worse off even than the Egyptians," said

* Deut. xiv. 7.

Myron, "who are only forbidden to eat their sacred animals. We Greeks are wiser than either; we eat what we like."

"And *do* what ye like," interposed Helon. "But we have the law."

"And what need," said Myron, "of any other law than that which is written in the hearts of all men?"

"Yet that this law, written in the heart, is not of itself sufficient, and does not supersede the necessity of a revealed law, you might have learned from your own Socrates. Remember what he says of his dæmon."

"If the Jew attempts to turn the weapons of the heathen against himself, let us see if the heathen cannot do the same with those of the Jew. Ye call Abraham the progenitor of your people."

"Undoubtedly," said Elisama.

"Did he not live many hundred years before the law was was given by Moses? If so, which ye cannot deny, this progenitor, whom ye prize so highly, and exalt above all men that ever lived, had not even heard of the law, and was no better than one of us."

Helon was for a while silent and perplexed. At length he replied, "The example of our father Abraham urges us to obedience to the law; for circumcision, which is a leading part of it, was commanded to him, and he performed it on all his house on the same day on which Jehovah made a covenant with him and changed his name."*

"I will give thee a better answer," interposed Elisama. "It is true, that Abraham had not the law of Moses, and could not, in our sense of the word, exhibit the righteousness of the law. He received the commands of the Lord immediately from himself, and therefore needed not that they should be engraved on tables of stone. And for the same reason he was permitted to sacrifice elsewhere than in Jerusalem, though his greatest and most costly sacrifice, that of his son, was appointed to be performed on Moriah, the hill where our

* Gen. xvii. 23.

temple stands. The Lord, who himself gave him the law, was everywhere with him, in Egypt as in Mamre. But now, since Israel has been stained with sin, the glory of Jehovah will dwell only on his own holy hill; and it is our duty to repair to Jerusalem, and bring thither our offerings."

A new view of the subject opened itself to Helon's mind, and Myron listened with great attention; Elisama continued.

"Obedience to the law presupposes three things. First, that a law is given. Secondly, that external circumstances are so disposed that the observance of the law is practicable; and, thirdly, that there be willingness to obey. The two first existed in Abraham, as perfectly as in his descendants. The third could only be formed in the people of Israel, by the events of several centuries, confirming the promises to the obedient, and the threats denounced against the disobedient. Israel is at length grown wise by experience, and the time draws near, when the Messiah shall come to deliver his people from oppression, and bless all nations of the earth by means of the law. But Abraham needed no such discipline — he practised voluntary obedience."

"By Apollo," said Myron, "thou speakest wisely!"

"Such a man," pursued Elisama, "do we venerate in our great progenitor. Is there any people that can produce one like him? In him everything was united essential to that happiness which is attainable only by the law. For this reason, also, he received the promise from Jehovah, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Abraham was to become a people, and that people must attain the righteousness of Abraham. But with a people such a change must be progressive. Israel first of all received the law on Sinai, then the promised land and a temple; and only through a long course of discipline learnt to obey the law willingly. These three periods, together with the end which is yet to come, and the beginning in Abraham, form the series of Jewish history. You Greeks like to have things presented to you in such arranged and comprehensive views."

"With good reason," exclaimed Myron, who had all that

curiosity for knowledge of every kind, which was the characteristic of his nation. "And now, my venerable Elisama, I would fain hear from thee the whole history of thy people, arranged according to the plan which thou hast traced. Ere we reach Gaza, we shall pass many an hour together, at the places of encampment, which might be so employed, agreeably to us all. You will delight in an opportunity of relating what redounds so much to the honor of your people; Helon will listen as gladly as you will relate; and I shall rejoice in an opportunity of hearing a connected narrative of your history."

"As thou wilt, Myron," said Elisama; "in the hope that you Greeks may also learn to value duly the chosen people of Jehovah. It is only of the history of such a people as Israel, that such an orderly developement can be made; it is necessary for this purpose that God himself should have taught us what plan of his he designs a nation to fulfil. Of Israel he declared this, even when he had no political existence; and we need only open our eyes upon his history, in order to perceive the progressive accomplishment of the promise. The Messiah, when he comes, will perhaps teach us to what purpose Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians have existed. I know not what it may be, but this I know, that theirs must be a subordinate part, and an inferior destination to that of Israel. This I tell you frankly, and you will see the proofs of it still more strongly in the history itself. Are you satisfied with it?"

"Only begin your discourse," said Myron, "and I promise you to listen, as the Hellenic nation listened to Herodotus, when he recited his history at the Olympic games. A Greek of Athenian blood, a pupil as I boast myself to be, of the Alexandrian philosophy, knows no greater pleasure than to acquire knowledge, wherever he may find it. Pythagoras travelled into the east, and Plato visited Egypt and Italy. Conversation is the life of life; and a discourse which is regularly renewed should have some fixed object, by which it may be resumed at each successive opportunity. Do us then this favor, and relate the history of your nation."

Helon had been sitting absorbed in thought on what he had

heard from his uncle. "What a noble subject," he now exclaimed, "for our conversation on our pilgrimage to the Passover! What an excellent preparation for the momentous times which are approaching! Truly, 'days should speak, and length of years give understanding.' How profound is the discernment of those 'whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditate upon it day and night!' Begin, then, dearest uncle, and speak of the glories of our forefathers."

"Youths," said Elisama, "I will not refuse your request, though ye praise me too much. I call to mind the psalm of Asaph, which I will rehearse to thee, Myron.

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching!
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth!
I will open my mouth in parables;
I will declare the histories of old,
Which we have known and heard,
Which our fathers have told us
That we might not hide them from their children,
Showing to the generation to come the praise of Jehovah,
His strength, and the wonders he hath done.
He established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which he commanded our fathers
That they should make known to their children;
That the generation to come might know them, the sons which should be born;
That when grown up they might declare them to their children,
That they might set their hope in God,
And not forget the works of God,
And keep his commandments.—Ps. lxxviii.

"Israel is rich in such psalms as this. The history of our nation lives in their poetry: it is interwoven with their prayers, it is the ground-work of doctrine and the theme of narrative; all our festivals rest upon it as their basis, and nothing great or important can take place in Israel, which has not a historical reference. The cause of this lies in the promise of Jehovah and in its fulfilment. We seek our wisdom in the revelation which God has given us — ye seek it in

your own reflections: hence our wisdom is historical, yours speculative. What we know of God and of his law, was communicated to us through the discourses of God to our fathers, or derived from the observation of his dealings with them. It is therefore a bold undertaking in which I engage, to relate the history of our nation, and I must stipulate beforehand that you will not expect from me anything like a perfect view of it in the halts of a caravan. You must also permit me, Myron, to go on, after the oriental manner, in an unbroken narrative, which besides better suits a history, than that dialogue form, interrupted by question and objection, in which you Greeks so much delight. There will be time for these when my narrative is ended."

"Make what stipulations thou wilt," said Myron, "only begin."

"For today," said Elisama, resuming, "I must confine myself to the patriarchs, not only because our discourse has been accidentally led to them, but because the knowledge of their history is absolutely necessary to understand what follows.

"Our father Abraham is at once the last star in the night of primeval history, and the morning star which announces the approaching day. The history of the creation and the fall you have doubtless heard already in the Bruchium; for I am told that both your philosophers and our Hellenists employ themselves very diligently upon it; and I must lament, that, leaving the true path of knowledge, they should prize the interpretations of the heathens above the genuine word of Jehovah. But enough of these men.

"Notwithstanding the fall of our first parents, they had still a just knowledge of God and of his will, connected with his promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. But when Cain was compelled to flee from his father's house, unwilling to relate to his children the story of his own fratricide, he represented himself as the origin of the human race, on which account his descendants, who had been brought up in his sins, called themselves the

Sons of Men; in contradistinction to which, the children of the other sons of Adam, who were acquainted with the history of the creation, called themselves *Sons of God.* By the sins of these sons of men, and their mixture with the sons of God, iniquity became so prevalent upon the earth, that Jehovah sent a deluge, in which only Noah and his family were saved. In him and the descendants of his son Shem alone, was the true knowledge preserved, when the former iniquities again obtained the ascendency among other nations, and they fell into idolatry. When the true religion began to give way before the false, even in Ur of the Chaldees, where Abram the son of Terah lived, Jehovah bade him leave his native country and his father's house, to go to a land which the Lord should show him. That land was Canaan. This Abram is our father Abraham, who when he arrived at Bethel, erected a tabernacle there, and built an altar, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord appeared often unto him and proved his faith: ten of these trials are recorded in scripture. The severest of them was that in which he was commanded to offer up his son Isaac, in whom the promise was to be fulfilled. But his steadfastness in all these trials made him worthy that on him all these promises should rest. God promised him, in the person of his descendants, the land of Canaan, which on this account, we still call the Land of Promise. The Lord made him to come forth from his tent, and said, 'Look towards heaven, and see if thou canst count the stars thereof—such shall thy seed be.'* On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, and said, 'To thy seed will I give this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates.' But these promises, to make his posterity a mighty nation and to give them a fair country for their inheritance, had their motive in a yet higher promise. After he had endured, with such noble firmness and resignation, the most grievous of all his trials, God said unto him, 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.'†

* Gen. xv. 5. † Gen. xxii. 18.

This prophecy is the radiant point of Jewish history, never obscured through all the vicissitudes of our condition, nay, wonderful to relate, shining most brightly in the very circumstances which seemed most unauspicious for its fulfilment. The promise was renewed to his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob; its import involves the history of the whole human race. Abraham stood alone in his knowledge and his worship of the one true God; except indeed that he found at Salem, the present Jerusalem, a single priest of the Most High, the king Melchisedec. It was necessary therefore that the people of the promise should separate themselves from all other nations, even from the rest of Abraham's descendants. In Isaac they separated themselves from Ishmael and his children; in Jacob from Esau and his children, the Edomites: for thus only could they continue to be the people of the promise.

"How great and dignified does the patriarch appear, in whom were united all those qualities, to which his descendants could only be formed by the lapse of a thousand years —the knowledge of the will of Jehovah from his own immediate communication; in his own house, and its precincts, a temple; unlimited faith and unreserved obedience!

"While I mention these three distinguishing characteristics of the patriarch, I cannot help dwelling more particularly on the second, of which I am reminded by the contrast of our life in Egypt; and because our present situation, living in tents and caravans in the desert, has some analogy with his. His whole dwelling, and the region in which for the time he had his abode, were consecrated as a temple by the manifestations of Jehovah. The manifold complexity of relations and collision of interests, which are so burdensome in the life of men in cities, were unknown to him, in the simple grandeur of his pastoral state. His days flowed on in intercourse with God, amidst the groves, the hills and the plains of the finest countries of the East. Now he dwells upon the lofty side of Lebanon, near the cedars that pierce the heavens; on the approach of the rainy season, he drives his herds to the

warmer plains of Jordan. He is in the fields with the earliest glow of morning, and his simple tent is designed only for shelter at night, and during the rain. Three hundred and eighteen servants, born in his house,* feed his countless flocks of sheep and goats, his herds of cattle, asses and camels. In the fairest part of the pasture the dark brown tents are pitched, and in the midst of them the tent of the patriarch. Seldom does he come into a city; for cities are the abodes of corruption. If a stranger makes his appearance, he is hospitably received, the fatling of the flock is killed, and while the patriarch's own hands prepare it for food, Sarah bakes cakes upon the hearth; the guest is feasted, and not till he has eaten and been satisfied is he asked who he is. Benevolence guides all his actions. If he falls in with another body of roving shepherds, he says to Lot, 'Why should there be strife betwixt me and thee; if thou wilt go to the left hand, I will go to the right; or if thou wilt go to the right hand, I will go to the left.' Independent of all without, he rules as a king in his own house: but his highest dignity is that he is also a priest there. He walks before God with a perfect heart: to him he repairs in danger and in joy, to him he offers thanks, to his command he is ready to sacrifice his dearest hopes; to him he erects altars, raises memorials of his providential guidance, and proclaims his name. And Jehovah dwells with his servant Abraham, he appears to him, and blesses him in all things; he discloses the future to him, and says, 'Shall I hide from Abraham that which I am about to do, seeing that he shall become a great and mighty nation; and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, and do what is just and righteous, that the Lord may accomplish unto Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.'†

"Thus he lived a complete century in Canaan; he came thither not as an old man, but in the prime of life, in his

* Gen. xiv. 14. † Gen. xviii. 17.

seventy-fifth year, and in his hundred and seventieth year he died, in a good old age, and was gathered to his people.

"His son Isaac and his grandson Jacob led the same patriarchal life. Both took to themselves wives from the native country of Abraham, that they might form no connexion with the Canaanites. Jehovah appeared to both of them, and their lives throughout, in an equal degree, were simple and happy, like that of Abraham.

"Such was the origin of our nation, and half the world joins with us to extol our great progenitor. The Magi of Persia; the Arabs, the sons of Ishmael, and the Edomites, the children of Esau, even Egypt itself celebrates the wisdom of Abraham, and the whole East praises his name.

"But the sun is already high in the heavens, the slaves are waiting for us with the food, and an old man needs rest before he undertakes a further journey."

The slaves brought the victuals prepared in the Jewish fashion, the round piece of leather was spread upon the ground; they sat around it, ate, and were satisfied. Myron often wished to renew the conversation, but Elisama did not speak during the meal, and Helon was lost in reflections on the glory of his nation, and in anticipation of the delight of soon standing where Abraham and Isaac had talked with God.

After the meal they all laid themselves down during the heat of noon. The evening came — but hardly had the night begun, when, at the fourth hour (about ten of our reckoning) the trumpets sounded for the first time. The tent was struck, the camels loaded, the travellers mounted their horses, each party resumed their former station in the line, and about midnight, after the third blast, they broke up from Gerrha. On account of the heat, caravans travel chiefly at night, and halt during the hottest time of the day. The march was now more orderly and peaceable. The flames flashed from the burning pitch-kettles which were borne aloft, and threw their light over the desert. It was an attractive sight, to behold them like scattered suns, along a

line of march extending for several thousand paces, and to see men and beasts travelling onward through the night by their ruddy gleam. Their journey lay this night and every night, as far as Gaza, along the sea, whose distant thunder was occasionally heard, mingling with the songs of the slaves and the bells of the camels.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HALT AT CASIUM.

In the morning our travellers found themselves in the neighborhood of Casium. The march had not been long, but the situations of the wells determine the halts of the caravans. Near the town a large sand-hill extended into the sea, on the point of which was built the temple of Jupiter Casius. The active Greek set off, though the distance was considerable, not for the purpose of worshipping there, but of examining it as a work of art. Helon felt no desire to accompany him, for on a journey to Jerusalem, and in his present state of mind, it seemed to him nothing less than a sin to visit a heathen temple, even for the gratification of his curiosity. Elisama praised his determination, and reminded him of the reproof delivered by the mouth of Jeremiah, "Thou hast always broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and hast said, I will not be restrained, but on every high hill and every green tree thou hast gone after idolatry."* In the mean time Elisama began, and Helon devoutly joined in singing the hundred and sixth psalm, which describes the journey, the wilderness, and the disobedience of Israel. "It is well," said Elisama, when they had done, "that our Greek is not here, or his nascent reverence for our people might be stopped in its growth. I must confess his society was at first very burthensome to

* Jer. ii. 20.

me, but he is more open to the reception of the truth than I had given him credit for being, and I have hopes that he may become a stranger of the gate."

Myron returned full of admiration of the precious works of art which he had found in the temple of the Casian Jupiter, in which however, as a connoisseur, he found of course, something to blame. At the meal the discourse of Helon and Myron (for Elisama was too oriental in his habits to talk at such a time) turned upon the ancient Goshen, in whose limits they now supposed themselves to be. They agreed that at the distance of fourteen hundred years it was very difficult to identify it, but that probably it was the district of Lower Egypt which is bounded by the sea, by the eastern branch of the Nile at Pelusium, and by the river of Egypt, and that it perhaps ascended as far as Heliopolis to the south.

When they awoke towards evening, refreshed by their sleep, the conversation respecting Goshen was resumed. Elisama, seated upon his carpet, thus took up the discourse:

"It seems then that we are at least on the skirts of that fruitful district of pasturage, in which the children of Abraham sojourned, and where they grew from a family to a people. Thou hast already heard, Myron, that our father Jacob came down to Egypt, with seventy persons, to his son Joseph, who had preserved the land of Pharaoh, by his wise precautions, from the miseries of famine; that two hundred and fifteen years after Jacob went down into Egypt, and four hundred and thirty years after Abraham left his native country at God's command, six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty fighting men of the Israelites quitted Egypt, without reckoning the twentytwo thousand Levites, or the women and children. During these four hundred and thirty years Israel grew into a nation.

"In order that the promise of Jehovah, 'that all nations should be blessed in Abraham,' might be accomplished, it may easily be conceived that it was necessary that Abraham should become a people. But there was no country where it could have been accomplished in so short a time as in this. Canaan

was already fully peopled, but in Goshen there was ample room for them to increase and spread. The Canaanites would not have looked on quietly for so many years, and have witnessed their increase, whereas the Egyptians would feel themselves bound by gratitude to Joseph, at least during the first century after his death, to abstain from any injury towards his nation. Nowhere else could Israel have been kept so free from mixture with other nations, as in the neighborhood of the Egyptians, whose religion inspired them with a horror of pastoral tribes. The land was at the same time fruitful, and facilitated the existence of numerous families. Finally, Egypt already possessed a civil polity more perfect than existed at that time in any other country ; and though no human means were necessary to form a lawgiver for Israel, yet by constantly observing a people living under a constitution which regulated the rights and duties of even the lowest of the people, the Israelites were prepared to value and receive a similar constitution themselves.

"When therefore Israel had become a numerous people, and began to feel the want of a system of laws, Divine Providence so arranged circumstances, as to awaken in them a longing for freedom and for the promised land. The Pharaohs inhumanly oppressed them, and made their lives bitter to them, by labor in brick and tile, and in all manner of service in the field. At length it was even given in command to the midwives to kill all the male infants. This was indeed, in one point of view, only a just punishment for the guilt of Israel, in worshipping the sacred animals of the Egyptians, and leaving the service of the true God : but as calamity, by the wise ordinance of Jehovah, serves at once for punishment and deliverance, the cruelty of the Egyptians proved the means of Israel's deliverance and exaltation.

"God raised up Moses and laid his spirit upon him. After the command of Pharaoh for the murder of the male infants, he was exposed by his parents among the reeds of the Nile, and rescued in a wonderful manner by the king's own daughter. At the royal court, where he was brought up, he became ac-

quainted with all the wisdom of the Egyptians. When forty years of age, hurried away by sympathy for his suffering countrymen, whom even at Pharaoh's court he had not forgotten, he slew an Egyptian who was committing an outrage upon an Israelite, and was compelled to flee. He took refuge in the wilderness, and by a pastoral life of forty years formed his mind in solitude and amidst the sublimities of nature, where only a faint remembrance of the world remained to him, and thoughts of God filled his soul. Here God appeared to him in mount Horeb, in a bush that burned with fire and yet was not consumed, and called him to be Israel's leader and deliverer.

"His apprehension of his own unworthiness was removed, and the Lord made known his name unto him; I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE. He began the great work, and at the first step had to contend with the unsteadiness of Israel, which, during the remaining forty years of his life, occasioned him no less trouble than the assaults of their enemies. Pharaoh refused to let the people go, and nine plagues in succession, which Jehovah denounced by Moses, and then brought upon the land, were able only for a time to overcome Israel's fickleness and Pharaoh's obstinacy. At last the tenth was inflicted, and on the fourteenth of the month Nisan, Israel, with their wives and their children, and all their possessions, came out from the house of bondage in Egypt, and passed through the Red Sea, in which the Egyptians, following them, were drowned. This is, of all the events in the history of our nation, the most important, from its connexion with the giving of the law which immediately followed. We keep the feast of the Passover in remembrance of this event. Our great leader was also a poet, and sang the following song, the oldest and the noblest ode of victory that the world can show:

I sing unto the Lord for he is great —
Chariot and horse he hath thrown into the sea.
The Lord is my strength, my song, my salvation;
He is my God, and I will sing praise unto him,

My father's God, and I will exalt him.
Jehovah is mighty in war,
Jehovah is his name.
Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea,
His chosen captains are drowned in the Red Sea.
The depths have covered them,
They sank to the bottom as a stone.
Thy right-hand, O Jehovah, is become glorious in power,
Thy right-hand, O Jehovah, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.
In the greatness of thy might thou overthrowest them that rise up against thee,
Thou sendest forth thy wrath which consumeth them as stubble.
With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together,
The floods stood upright as a heap,
The waves were congealed in the depths of the sea.
The enemy said,—
I will pursue I will overtake, I will divide the spoil,
My desire shall be gratified upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.
Thou didst blow with thy breath, the sea covered them,
They sank like lead in the mighty waters.
Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?
Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?
Thou stretchedst out thy right-hand — the earth swallowed them.
Thou hast led forth in thy mercy thy redeemed people,
Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy place;
The people hear and are afraid,
Anxiety taketh hold on the inhabitants of the land of the Philistines;
The princes of Edom quake,
Terror taketh hold on the mighty men of Moab,
All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.
Let fear and dread fall upon them, by thy mighty arm,
Let them become stiff as stone,
Till thy people pass over, O Lord,
Till the people which thou hast purchased pass over.
Bring them in, plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance,
To the place of thy dwelling which thou thyself hast prepared,
To the sanctuary which thy hands have built.
Jehovah reigns for ever and ever.—Exod. xv.

"Israel was now made free. But this was scarcely accomplished when it was made also a holy nation, and on the

fiftieth day after the departure from Egypt, God gave to our fathers that treasure which hallows them above every other people, the law upon mount Sinai. Yonder in the desert, in the midst of a sandy and naked region, rises a mountain, with two summits, of which the lower is called Horeb, the higher Sinai. Northward from them are two valleys, terminating in a plain, in which the people were encamped. In this impressive solitude, cut off from all other nations of the earth, surrounded with steep and pointed rocks, beneath a burning sky, amidst the thunders and the lightnings of Jehovah's presence, they received the law.

"Jehovah declared to Moses that Israel should be to him a kingdom of priests and a holy people.* For this purpose they were commanded to wash their garments and keep themselves holy to the third day, and it was forbidden that man or beast should ascend the mountain, or even touch it with his foot. The third day came. Early in the morning 'there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the lower part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount trembled greatly. And the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and grew louder, and Moses spake, and the Lord answered him with a voice.'

"Awful preparations! symbols of the presence of Jehovah! who drew near to give the law. While he thus displayed himself in all the terrific majesty of heaven on the loftiest pinnacle of the land: and the people, overwhelmed with terror, felt their own feebleness before him, he gave to Moses the tables with the ten commandments, and afterwards the rest of the law; and all was concluded with a promise to the obedient, and the threat, 'Cursed be he that

* Exod. xix. 6.

fulfilleth not all the words of this law to do it. And all the people shall say Amen.'

"The whole constitution and legislation of Israel rests on the relation of the people to God as their king. From the covenant between them arose a twofold authority. Aaron was the first high priest and Moses the first chief. The high priest conducted the worship of the people before Jehovah; the chief directed their civil and military affairs. Their employment in the land which they were to occupy was to be agriculture.

"But the Jews, who had been corrupted by living in Egypt, were not fit subjects for such a constitution. It was necessary that a new generation should arise, and for this purpose Moses led them forty years backward and forward in the wilderness, and only two, of whom he himself was not one, came into the promised land. Forty-four stations in the desert are reckoned up, in which they successively encamped, as we do now; and it was only by the severest discipline that they could be retained in obedience. Often was Jehovah compelled to visit them with heavy calamities, and sweep them away by thousands. Yet he never ceased also to perform miracles of mercy and almighty power upon them.

"Amidst all these sins of the people, in their forty years' wandering in the wilderness, Moses was the representative of the divine authority, and the medium of divine communication. Against him the fury of the rebellious people was vented, and by him Jehovah both blessed and punished them. Moses stood among them, like a rock in the desert, a wonder or rather a miracle of firmness combined with meekness, steadfast resolution, with wise indulgence, absolute submission to God, with boldness and determination in the guidance of the people. In the long and unhappy period of forty years of wandering, he displayed the aptitude for command which his kingly education had given him, joined with that love to his suffering countrymen, with which he could only have been inspired by being a native Jew.

"He died on mount Nebo, in the sight of that land for

which he had done and suffered all to which human strength was equal. His eye was permitted to behold it, but not his foot to tread its soil. Firm as he was in acting and in suffering, he had once allowed himself to be overcome, and therefore he was not permitted to attain the end of his journey, or go to his rest in Canaan. Perhaps it was also the will of God, that the hands which had been stretched out over the Red Sea, which had received the tables of the law from Jehovah, and had built his tabernacle, should not be stained by the blood of the Canaanites. Even in the battle with Amalek, these hands were only lifted up in the attitude of prayer.* This is the first period of the history of our people."

"Our best thanks belong to thee, venerable old man," said Myron, "for the relation of it, and I can readily believe, that the history of thy nation has more in it than is commonly supposed. It was, I must confess, in a very different way that Lycurgus, Solon, Numa Pompilius, and even Pythagoras himself, gave their laws. There is something grand, exalted and divine, in the manner in which Moses speaks and acts. But permit me to remind you, that though you mentioned his being brought up at the court of Pharaoh, and instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, you have given us no hint that he may have learned much from the pillars of Isis, and that an imitation of the Egyptian polity is everywhere conspicuous in your law, especially in the double power of the king and the priest, the institution of the sacerdotal caste, the encouragement given to agriculture, your festivals, and many other particulars."

"I gave no hint of it," said Elisama, "because in this sense it does not exist. To say nothing of its being as yet an undetermined point, whether the Jews learned these things from the Egyptians, or the Egyptians from the Jews; I will suppose that the wisdom of the Egyptians is of that high antiquity which you ascribe to it, and maintain that Jehovah wisely chose institutions for his people not too remote from those

* Exod. xvii. 11.

to which they were accustomed; that some things, which were for higher reasons essential in the Jewish economy, have an accidental coincidence with circumstances of the Egyptian customs. But disregarding outward and accidental things, let the spirit of the two systems be compared, and you will find that one is the spirit of God, and the other the spirit of the world. In our religion there is no worship of animals or of images, no polytheism, no secret doctrines of the priests. These are essential points, which show that the legislation of Moses must have had a higher origin, and was not learned by him from any other nation. Would it, besides, be surprising if, in giving a divine revelation to his people, Jehovah should have chosen a form for its communication, in which, as being familiar to them, they would more readily adopt it? Though this form was of human invention, it was purified and hallowed by God's adoption of it."

CHAPTER V.

THE HALT AT OSTRACINE.

The march began, as usual, about midnight, and terminated at Ostracine. They had not proceeded far from Casium, when they reached the lake Sirbonis, whose surface was so covered with the drifted sand, that they had difficulty in distinguishing it, in the darkness, from the surrounding wilderness. A few Sabbath-days' journeys further on, they came to a green, fertile and blooming vale, called Larish, in the midst of the desert, like a flower growing in the sand. A small brook discharges itself by this valley into the lake Sirbonis. In summer, it is commonly dry; now its clear waters were flowing, and the stars were reflected in them. Elisama checked his horse, as they were about to cross it, and called

to Helon, "Farewell to Egypt! this is the boundary; I cross the *river of Egypt!*"

There seemed to be something melancholy in his tone, as if the parting were painful, notwithstanding his approach to the Holy Land. The ominous anticipations of Helon's mother occurred to him, and though at Alexandria he had despised them as female weakness, he could not shake them off. Helon called aloud, with an animated voice, so that all before and behind might hear him, "Farewell, Egypt; I see thee not again — or only as a new man!" He rode forward, giving himself up to the imaginations of his own mind, to which there was something of a fascinating interest in this nightly procession, amidst songs near and distant, the measured tinkling of the bells, beneath the glimmering light of the stars, and ruddy gleams of pitch-kettles, which deepened the surrounding shadows. He felt now more than ever that he had left Egypt behind, and was surprised at the almost poetical enthusiasm which began to be awakened within him.

Two hours after sunrise, they arrived at Ostracine. No one was wearied. The tent was pitched, and they laid themselves under it. Helon was full of the animating reflections which the journey in the night had excited in him; and Elisama still under the influence of the melancholy which had seized him at the river of Egypt. All emotions are durable in the mind of an oriental, and he does not quickly part either with his sorrow or his joy. Yet all were full of alacrity, and Myron, as usual, the first to speak, began thus:

"I shall rejoice, Elisama, to hear the continuation of your narrative. I presume we would all rather speak and hear, than sleep."

"Listen, then," said Elisama, "and perhaps the narrative may enable me to throw off the melancholy that weighs upon me. I related to you, at Casium, that Jehovah had given the law to our nation, in preference to every other, as their inheritance, and their treasure. But though given, much was yet necessary in order that the law should be obeyed. It was not in every land, nor under all circumstances, practicable to walk

blameless in all the commandments of the Lord. The whole legislation on mount Sinai had a reference to the future condition of Israel in Canaan, where those circumstances, under which alone the law could be fulfilled, either already existed, or were to be produced.

"First of all, it was necessary that the land of Canaan, which was still occupied by many native tribes, should be conquered. Moses, the man 'with whom Jehovah talked as a man talketh with a friend,'* was dead. But he had left his people the law, and an ardent longing for rest in the land of which he had presented so attractive a picture; and, besides all this, he had left them a valiant successor to himself, Joshua, the son of Nun, who, with Caleb, had alone been found worthy, among so many thousands, to enter into the promised land. Joshua was not a second Moses; for a prophet like him has not since arisen in Israel, who had known God face to face. But the Lord calls him a man in whom his spirit is, and commands Moses 'to lay his hands upon him, and present him to the priest Eleazar, and the whole congregation, and put his glory upon him, that all the children of Israel might obey him.'† This Moses had done, and when he died the Lord confirmed the appointment, and said to Joshua, 'Be strong, and of good courage, and thou shalt divide unto this people the land which I have sworn unto their father to give them.'

"By him, accordingly, the conquest of the land of promise was accomplished. The terror of the Lord went before him; the swelling Jordan divided to let him and the people pass; Jericho and Ai fell before him, in a manner equally wonderful and terrific, and the march of the victorious army proceeded without a check to Sichem, which Jacob had given to Joseph. The craft of the Gibeonites and their neighbors saved their lives, but furnished Israel with the *Nethinim*, the hewers of wood and drawers of water.‡ Thus he smote one and thirty kings, and divided the land among the tribes, estab-

* Exod. xxxiii. 11. † Num. xxvii. 23. ‡ Josh. ix.

lished cities of refuge, and built Timnath-Serah on the hills of Ephraim.* The tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh, received their inheritance on the eastern side of the Jordan; but, on condition that forty thousand men from among them should assist in the conquest of the country on the other side, and on their return should erect, near the Jordan, a monument of their having partaken in the war with their brethren. A short time before his death, he held a general assembly of the people, in which he made Israel renew the covenant with Jehovah.† When he died, he bequeathed to fourteen judges, who ruled Israel in succession, the difficult duty of upholding what he had established. The people, not yet sufficiently confirmed in the law, since more was necessary for this purpose than the mere possession of the land, allowed themselves to be seduced into the idolatry of the Canaanites. From without, the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Canaanites of the north, Midianites, Amalekites, Amonites, and Philistines, harassed and subdued the yet unconsolidated nation. In this way nearly five hundred years elapsed, in which fourteen heroes and sages, whom we call Judges, arose, and each, in their time, employed their energies in opposing the universal corruption, or delivering the people from oppression. So much did it cost to secure the possession of the portion which Jehovah had given to his people! Samuel closes this list of heroes, a man on whom, in a peculiar manner, the spirit of the Lord rested, and who, under the influence of this spirit, established schools of the prophets, to perpetuate the knowledge of the law.

"Thus was the land acquired; but there was still wanting a civil constitution, and a vigorous executive government. Jehovah alone would be their king; but the people felt the necessity that this dignity should be embodied to them in the person of one from among themselves. Samuel disapproved this imitation of the customs of the heathens, but he was compelled to yield, and anointed first Saul, and then

* Josh. xix. 49. † Josh. xxiii. xxiv.

David, king. In the whole history of our nation, there is no character that takes a more powerful hold of human sympathies than David, from his youth and his friendship, his heroic spirit, his conquests and institutions, his weaknesses and his sufferings. Scripture calls him 'a man after God's own heart.' Under him the promise of God to Abraham was fulfilled in a large sense, and from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates, the whole country was subject to Israel. But he did still more. He became the central point to all the tribes who had hitherto lived in nominal federation and virtual independence. He united all the five millions of his subjects by a common bond, and made Jerusalem the capital. For the first time, under him, it was possible to observe the civil laws of Moses. Joshua had conquered a country for the law, but David established a state for it.

"Still one thing was wanting, the temple, in which the glory of the Lord should dwell. David had already made preparations for the building of a temple, but it was not the pleasure of Jehovah that he should erect it. It was reserved for Solomon his son, to be the third, who, after Joshua and David, should furnish the last and most important of those means which were still wanting to make the external observance of the law practicable. And how did he perform this duty! In what strains do our sacred books speak of his wisdom, of his riches and of the unparalleled splendor of his temple! Kings and queens came from afar to behold this wonder of the world.

"The reign of Solomon was the era in which all was fulfilled, which Israel could still desire; in which everything united to give external dignity to the worship of Jehovah. The country was tranquil within, and at peace with its neighbors, governed by its king with wisdom, and united by the temple, which served as a central point to the whole nation. This is the most splendid era of our history, and when an Israelite pictures to himself days of happiness and prosperity, it is under the image of the reign of Solomon.

"The Books of Kings relate, that at Solomon's entrance on

his kingly office, after he had sacrificed a thousand burnt offerings on the hills of Gibeon, Jehovah appeared to him in a dream,* and asked him what he should give him. Solomon, in his humility, calls himself a little child, who knew not how to go out or to come in, and asks only an understanding heart, to discern good from evil. And the answer of Solomon pleased the Lord, and God said unto him, 'Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, nor riches, nor the life of thine enemies, but hast asked understanding to discern judgment, behold I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have given thee also that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.' Accordingly we are told of his wisdom, 'that he excelled all the children of the east country and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five; and he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of insects, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon from all kings of the earth which had heard of his wisdom.†

"The temple was a monument both of his wisdom and his wealth. Phœnicia excelled at that time all other nations of the earth in skill in the arts, and Solomon made a bargain with Hiram, king of Tyre, both for workmen and for cedar-wood from Lebanon. Solomon had seventy thousand men who carried burthens, and eighty thousand carpenters on the mountain, without reckoning the superintendants of the works. Seven years was this multitude employed upon the erection of the temple; the foundation was laid in the fourth

* Kings iii. 5. † Kings iv. 30.

year of his reign, and it was completed in the eleventh. When it was finished, he assembled the elders of Israel, and the heads of tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord into its place, unto the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, under the wings of the cherubim. And when Solomon had offered his incomparable dedication-prayer, and blessed the people, and had sacrificed oxen and sheep, he and all Israel held a feast, a great assemblage, before the Lord for fourteen days.

"Thus was the second period of the history of our nation completed. In the first they received the law; in the second they obtained a country, a king, and a temple. Now every man in Judah and in Israel might dwell securely under his own vine and his own fig-tree, from Dan to Beersheba, and serve Jehovah. We have next to see whether they did so. But I will break off here, that I may preserve unmingled the remembrance of those glorious days."

"Blessed be the Lord," exclamed Helon, "the King of the world, who vouchsafed such a time to his people!"

"It is not to be denied," said Myron, "that it must have been a joyful time in Jerusalem, and the whole land of Judea under Solomon. And yet your nation seems to me better fitted for a wandering life through the wilderness, such as was yesterday described to us."

"Why so?" asked Helon.

"Because you knew not how to improve your good fortune."

Helon was astonished.

"I pity a people, so destitute of all taste and skill in the fine arts as yours. They want to build a temple and a house of the forest of Lebanon — gold and silver they have in abundance, but they are obliged to send for artists from Tyre; they come, execute their works, and leave these behind them, without having communicated to your nation the smallest portion of their dexterity."

"There have not been wanting amongst us in all ages," said Helon, "excellent artificers."

"Single instances decide nothing," said Myron, "but a nation which, in its most flourishing period, is obliged to engage artists from foreign kings, and can do nothing by its own ingenuity and dexterity, is surely a poor and helpless race. How different from the great Hellenic people! Poetry in abundance I have indeed heard from you, but this is the only branch of art in which you have done anything. No painting, no statuary, no drama!"

"Thou speakest," said Elisama, interposing angrily, "like a blind heathen, and what I have so often intimated seems to have been lost upon thee. Israel was not designed, and never aimed, to excel in such worldly arts. It was to be a kingdom of priests and a holy people, to receive and to preserve the law of Jehovah; and on this account he calls it his people, his Jeshurun, his beloved Israel. The time which other nations might devote to the culture of the elegant arts, Israel was to spend in the observance of the law. You have omitted all mention too of our music. This and our poetry are alone worthy to accompany the people before the presence of Jehovah; his temple must be splendid, but it was of no consequence that it was made so by foreign hands. Besides, the present temple, which yields little if at all to the former, was built by native artists; and supposing that in Solomon's time architecture was unknown amongst us, could this skill be reasonably expected in a nation, which had struggled for five hundred years for the possession of the soil, which even then had not been completely united for more than half a century, and had passed a considerable portion even of that short time in internal commotion!"

"You are unjust, Myron, in another respect," added Helon, "the state of the arts among a people should be judged of from that department, in which it has put forth its powers. Compare our poets with yours; we have no need to fear the comparison."

"Mention to me then your Homer and Sophocles," said Myron.

"In those species of poetry our fathers have written nothing. But name to me a Greek, who has surpassed the odes of David, the elegies of Jeremiah, or the epigrams and scolia of Solomon.

"I will read your poets," said Myron, "when I return to Alexandria, but it is impossible that a barbarian should rival the great masters of Greece."

"Compare, with a mind free from prejudice, as becomes a true critic of art, and you will be astonished at the lyric flights of our psalms, which leave Pinder behind; at the plaintive tenderness of Jeremiah, more deep and touching than that of Simonides. Remember, too, that this poetry of ours was never designed by its authors as a work of art, or a display of poetic power, but was the effusion of a mind swelling with the praise of Jehovah, lamenting its own, or its country's sorrows, or intent upon enforcing the precepts of the law. With us the artist is more prominent and interesting than his work; you think you have succeeded, when the artist is forgotten in the merit of his production."

Sallu brought in the meal, and they ate and drank in peace, Elisama and Helon ruminating on the glory of Solomon, Myron not less pleased with his reflections on the pre-eminence of his own nation. They slept from the heat of the noonday till the sun went down, and when evening came on, were still in a state between sleeping and waking, enjoying the coolness of the breeze. The stars had begun to appear over the desert, when they were roused by a blast of the trumpet, in its harshest tone. They started up. "That," said Elisama, "is not the signal of the march; it is an alarm." Sallu rushed in and informed them that a horde of Arabs was in sight, and threatened an attack. The tumult was excessive. The men mounted their horses and hastened to the side on which the danger appeared. The guides vociferated and endeavored to restore order. The bows were strung; the

slaves struck the tents, and were preparing to drive the camels further into the rear. After all these preparations had been made the enemy retired, feeling himself probably too weak to encounter such a resistance.

While all were resuming their places, Myron seemed somewhat disappointed at the loss of the adventure which he had promised himself, to season the insipid sameness of the caravan's march ; Elisama turned himself in the direction of Jerusalem, and in an attitude of prayer repeated,

When I call, my enemies turn back;
This I know, for God is with me.
In God have I put my trust, I will not fear ;
What can man do unto me ?
Thy vows are upon me, O God !
I will pay my thank-offerings unto thee :
For thou deliveredst my soul from death,
My foot from falling,
That I may walk before God in the land of the living ?
Ps. lvi. 10—14.

The guide was not willing to remain till midnight in this place, and gave the signal for departure. The alarm into which they had just been thrown, the terrors of their fellow-travellers, and the tumult of departure, were unable to turn the minds of Helon and Elisama from the glories of the age of Solomon, and they rehearsed together the following psalm, which, composed primarily in his honor, was supposed to carry also a secret reference to one much greater than Solomon :

The mountains shall declare peace to the people
And the hills announce righteousness.
They shall fear thee, as long as the sun and moon endure,
Throughout all generations.
He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass,
As showers that water the earth.
In his days shall the righteous flourish,
And abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.
He shall have dominion from sea to sea,

From the river to the ends of the earth,
They that dwell in the desert shall bow before him,
And his enemies shall lick the dust.
The kings of Tarshish and of all the isles shall bring presents,
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
All kings shall fall down before him.
All nations shall serve him —
A handful of corn, scattered in the earth on the top of the mountains,
Shall wave its fruit like the trees of Lebanon.
And the peopled cities shall flourish like grass of the earth.
His name shall endure forever;
His name shall be continued as long as the sun.
Men shall be blessed in him;
All nations shall call him blessed! — Ps. lxxii.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HALT AT RHINOCORURA.

They arrived in safety, and at an early hour, at Rhinocorura, and encamped where a copious stream from the mountains had produced verdure and fertility upon its banks. Elisama, who, from his advanced age was easily exhausted by an unusual excitement, was compelled to lie down to rest immediately on his arrival, and it was not till after the meal that he was able to resume his narrative.

"I have," said he, "a long and melancholy history to relate. The vicissitudes of five hundred years were necessary, in order to impress upon the mind of Israel the conviction, that the retributive Providence of God watched over their observance of the law, and rewarded or punished them according as they kept or broke it. Yesterday we left our nation on the highest and most brilliant pinnacle of national prosperity, possessed of the law, of the land of promise, and of a temple in which all the outward rites of Jehovah's worship might

be observed. One thing only was wanting to make Israel that blessed people, by whom all other nations were to be blessed — willing obedience. But something more was necessary to produce this obedience, than the possession of the law and the means of keeping it. It must be regarded as an extraordinary mark of the favor of Jehovah towards Israel, that everything was so combined, as to impress the doctrine of retribution upon them, both by fact and precept. No people exhibits such a quick succession and such a striking alternation of reward and punishment, so that Jehovah may be said to have set it up as a monument to the nations of his retributive justice. Its history, however, was not designed merely for the instruction of others, but primarily to teach Israel itself this great lesson; and for this purpose a succession of prophets was raised up, to enforce by their instruction the moral which the events of history were teaching.

"Samuel had founded schools of the prophets, and we read of Nathan, the prophet, in the history of David. But it is to the period which follows the reign of Solomon, that they more appropriately belong. This period begins with the separation of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Even in the last years of his reign, his splendor may have been a source of oppression to his people, who called upon Rehoboam his successor for alleviation of their burthens. Young, and following the advice of youthful counsellors, he threatened, instead of granting their request. On this Jeroboam, who had come out of Egypt, where he had premeditated his destructive plans against the house of David, was chosen king by ten tribes, while Judah, Benjamin and Levi, adhered to Rehoboam, and formed the kingdom of Judah; Jeroboam, now become the king of Israel, erected his throne at Sichem, and fearing that by going up to the temple at Jerusalem, the people might be tempted to re-unite with the kingdom of Judah, he set up the worship of the golden calves, at Bethel and at Dan. He was the exact opposite of David, and the scripture designates him as 'the man that caused Israel to

sin.'* This fearful degeneracy could not pass unpunished. Ahia, the prophet, predicted the extermination of his house. His son Nadab, who walked in the way of his father, was killed by Baasha, who succeeded him as king, and took up his abode in Thirza, and who, walking in the way of Jeroboam, received from the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani, a fearful denunciation of divine vengeance.† His son Elah fell, when in a state of intoxication, by the sword of Zimri; and thus the prophetic word was a second time fulfilled. Zimri, besieged in Thirza by Omri, whom the people in the camp had chosen king, set fire to the palace and perished in the flames. Omri built Samaria, and was succeeded by his son Ahab. Ahab was king of Israel, at the same time that Jehoshaphat was king of Judah. Though they were allied by the marriage of their children, they were directly opposite in their characters. Ahab, wicked and devoted to idolatry, added the worship of Baal to sins which were already practised in Israel, and thus brought upon himself the most awful threatenings of Jehovah. Jehoshaphat, weak, but faithful to the law, sent Levites through the country to teach and judge,‡ and obtained the mercy of Jehovah.

"In the days of these two kings, Elijah made his appearance; he may be called by eminence *the prophet.* His native place was Thisbah, but he traversed the whole country from side to side, clad in a skin, with a leathern girdle about his loins, denouncing, in the boldest and most glowing terms, the worship of Baal — a fearful and sublime phenomenon. Now he appears boldly before the throne — now he wanders a fugitive in the wilderness: at one time he denounces the wrath of Jehovah on backsliding Israel; at another he slaughters, on Carmel, the idolatrous priests of Baal; today he is the messenger of Jehovah to bring comfort to the widow of Zarephath; tomorrow he appears before Ahab and his queen, and predicts their dreadful fate. His name carries terror with it to the hearts of the guilty, and inspires the righteous with courage.

* 1 Kings xiv. 16. † 1 Kings xvi. 1—6. ‡ 2 Chron. xvii. 7.

"His disciple, Elisha, anointed Jehu, and predicted that the kingdom should continue in his family to the fifth generation. These kings, though not acceptable to God as David was, yet opposed the progress of idolatry. Jehu put to death the worshippers of Baal, and made a pool of his temple. In consequence this dynasty continued on the throne and flourished till the fifth generation; and under the fourth, Jeroboam the son of Joash, the ancient limits were regained, and Israel extended from Hamath to the sea of the plain, as Jonah, the son of Amittai, had foretold to him.* Still, however, the calves remained in Dan and Bethel, the relics of that idolatry which the people had learned in Egypt. As a punishment for this, a terrible interregnum ensued, at the close of which, Zechariah, the fifth from Jehu, came to the throne, but was murdered by Shallum. This is the third fulfilment of the prophecy of Jehovah respecting the royal houses of Israel.

"This is the time in which Jonah, Amos, Hosea, and the great Isaiah, prophesied. Jonah was sent to Nineveh, the largest city then existing, to preach the judgments of Jehovah. Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoah, prophesied to all the surrounding nations, and last of all to Judah and Israel, the punishment of their sins, beginning with these terrific words;

> The Lord will thunder from Zion,
> And utter his voice from Jerusalem.
> The habitations of the shepherds shall mourn,
> And the top of Carmel shall wither.

"And as he successively denounces to Damascus, to Gaza, to Tyre, and the other neighboring states, the punishments that awaited them, he begins each prophecy with the alarming words,

> Thus saith Jehovah;
> Three sins I have passed by,
> The fourth I cannot overlook.

"He beholds first the approach of a desolating flight of

*2 Kings xiv. 25.

locusts, then a terrible fire, and having interceded against both, he sees the Lord, standing with a plummet in his hand beside the wall, and hears the words:

Behold I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel;
I will not again pass by them any more.
The high places of Isaac shall be desolate,
And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,
And I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.
Amos vii. 7.

"Hosea, the son of Beeri, is first of all commanded to contract a symbolical marriage, to indicate the infidelity of the congregation of Israel against Jehovah. Then he breaks forth in the highest and boldest strain of indignation:

Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah,
The trumpet in Ramah!
Cry aloud at Bethaven,
'They are after thee, O Benjamin!'
Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke,
And upon the tribes of Israel
I make known what shall surely be.
The princes of Judah were like them that remove the land-mark;
Therefore will I pour out my wrath upon them like water.*

"The prophetic words were soon accomplished, in the rapid downfall of the kingdom of Israel. Assyria, which Jehovah calls the rod of his indignation,† made Menahem, the next king after Zechariah, tributary; and Tiglath-pilesar carried away many of the inhabitants of Israel. Galilee, and the district beyond Jordan were lost. Hoseah, the last king of Israel, contrary to the advice of Isaiah, made a league with So, the king of Egypt, and was defeated by Salmanassar. Samaria was destroyed, the inhabitants carried beyond the Tigris, to the neighborhood of the river Chebar, and the Lord put away Israel from before him, as he threatened by his servants the prophets.

"Where once the tribes of Israel, the sons of Joseph,

* Hos. v. 8. † Isaiah x. 5.

Ephraim, and Manasseh had dwelt, strangers from the east had settled themselves, and being infested with lions, they requested from the king that Israelitish priests might be sent them; and so they polluted the land, the village of Jacob, and many other sacred spots, by a mixture of the worship of God with that of idols, which continues to defile it even to this day.

"Thus had Jehovah manifested, both by deed and precept, his retributory judgments in the case of Israel. Would that Judah had been wise, and had learned from the fate of her sister kingdom that lesson which they who will not read must feel!

"Rehoboam sat upon the throne of David, but had no resemblance to him in character. He built high places and pillars, and planted groves, and committed the abominations of the heathens, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel, upon every hill and under every green tree. Jehovah sent Sisak, king of Egypt, who conquered all the cities and Jerusalem itself, and carried away both the royal treasure and that of the temple into his own country.

"Abijah followed him. He trusted in Jehovah, and was successful in a great battle against Israel, in which he defeated an enemy who was at least twice as numerous.* He entered the battle with the words, 'With us is the Lord our God, and we have not forsaken him, and the priests which minister unto the Lord, the sons of Aaron and the Levites in their occupations.'

"His successor Asa, by the same faith, smote again a mighty host of invaders from Arabia and Ethiopia, as the prophet Azariah had foretold. How greatly was the power of Jehoshaphat increased, by his zeal against idolatry, and his obedience to God, and in how humbled a condition did he return from a war in which the prophet Micaiah had warned him not to engage! He unfortunately gave his son, Jehoram, Athaliah, Ahab's daughter, to wife; and when the iniquity

* 2 Chron. xiii.

of Israel was thus communicated to Judah, by this seed of Jezebel, punishment, oppression and distress soon followed, till Joash, who had escaped her murderous hand, was brought forth from the temple where he had been concealed by Jehoiada, and placed upon the throne of David. Uzziah was prosperous against all his enemies, as long as the prophet Zechariah lived; but a grievous leprosy fell upon him when he daringly presumed to approach the Lord, and offer him incense after the manner of the priests. To him succeeded Ahaz, the worst and most infatuated of the sons of David, who being given up to Syrian idolatry and superstition, closed the temple and sought aid of Assyria. But how strikingly was his apostacy punished, when he was compelled to give the treasures of the temple to these very allies!

"Even down to this time, how triumphantly had the retributive providence of God been manifested in the history of our people! What wonderful accomplishment of the prophetic word, even in years, names, and individual occurrences! But about this time Isaiah arose, towering with an eagle's flight, now encouraging king and people with the promise of divine favor, now humbling them with denunciations against their sins, and above all predicting, in clearer language than any preceding prophet, HIM who was to be the consolation and the glory of Israel — the Messiah! He who, when he received his prophetic commission, saw Jehovah seated on a throne, high and lifted up, and the seraphim around him crying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts*— whose lips were touched with a live coal from the altar; and whom the Lord himself sent to speak in his name, was well fitted either to denounce captivity and punishment to the people or to describe the glorious days of Emanuel, the son of the virgin.

> Behold the Lord, the Lord of Hosts
> Shall lop the bough with a loud crash,
> And the high tops shall be hewn down

* Isaiah vi.

And the lofty shall be made low.
He fells the thickets of the forests with the axe,
And Lebanon falls by a mighty hand.
Yet there shall come forth a shoot from the stem of Jesse,
And a scion shall grow out of his root;
And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of the knowledge and fear of Jehovah.
He shall be of quick discernment in the fear of Jehovah,
And shall not judge according to appearances,
Nor decide according to hearsay.
But he shall judge the poor in righteousness,
And speak for the right of the oppressed in the land.
He shall smite the evil doer with his tongue,
And slay the wicked with the breath of his lips.
Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
And faithfulness the cincture of his reins.
Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
And the calf and the young lion, and the fatling shall be together,
And a little child shall lead them.
And the heifer and the she-bear shall feed together,
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like an ox;
The suckling shall play upon the hole of the aspic,
And the weaned child lay his hand upon the den of the basilisk:
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah,
As the waters cover the depths of the sea. — Is. x. 33, 34 and xi. 1—9.

"Contemporary with Isaiah, the sublimest of our prophets, was Micah, the Morasthite, who uttered these words:

The sun goeth down over the prophets
And the day shall be dark over them.
Then shall the seers be ashamed,
And the diviners confounded.
Yea, they shall all cover their faces
Because no fulfilment cometh from Jehovah.
But I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord,
Full of truth, and of courage,
To declare unto Jacob his transgression

And unto Israel his sin.
For this reason shall Zion be ploughed as a field,
And Jerusalem shall become heaps,
And the temple-hill as the high places of the forest.
But in the last days it shall come to pass
That the hill of the Lord's temple shall be established in the top of the mountains,
And it shall be exalted above the hills,
And nations shall flow unto it;
And many people shall come and say,
Come and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah,
And to the house of the God of Jacob,
That he may teach us of his ways
And we may walk in his paths.
For the law shall go forth from Zion
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
He shall judge among many people,
And be arbiter of strong nations afar off.
They shall beat their swords into plough-shares,
And their spears into pruning-hooks;
Nation shall not lift up the sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.
But they shall sit every man under his own vine and under his figtree,
And none shall make them afraid:
For the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken it. — Micah iii. iv.

"Such prophets as these spoke in the days of Hezekiah, a weak but pious man. When indeed could the word of prophesy be more seasonable or more needed? The doctrine of retribution was now fully developed. Israel had ceased to be; Judah still existed, through the piety of her kings. Had the prophet to speak of judgment — he had only to point to the hills of Ephraim, and her sons on the banks of Chebar: was the faithfulness of Jehovah and his recompense of obedience, the theme — the seed of David still sat upon the throne of Judah, while so many dynasties had successively occupied that of Israel. But there was another occasion for a prophet; for danger threatened on all sides, and Sennacherib with his immense host besieged Jerusalem. Today the army of the conquerer stood around the terrified city

and its trembling king. He goes dejected to the house of the Lord, spreads out before him the letters and demands of the haughty invader, and prays to Jehovah. Isaiah the prophet declares to him, 'He shall not come into this city; for I will defend it to save it, for mine own sake and for David my servant's sake.'* And in the morning Sennacherib flees before the angel of the Lord, who had smitten his hosts during the night. But Jehovah, who was so benign towards those that called upon him in humility, showed himself equally severe towards the proud. When Hezekiah, thoughtless and vain, had shown his treasures to the Babylonians, a nation then of little account in comparison with the Assyrians, Isaiah appears before him, and says, 'Behold the time cometh, when all that is in thine house and all that thy fathers have collected unto this day shall be carried away to Babylon, nothing shall remain, saith Jehovah.'†

"To Hezekiah succeeded his son Manasseh, a prince wholly unlike his father, who, as a punishment of his offences, was carried away to Babylon, and brought back when he repented and returned to Jehovah. His reign is the picture of the history of the people in this period; sin and punishment, repentance and favor!

"Some time after began the days of Josiah, who was pious and prosperous under the guidance of Hilkiah, as Joash had been under that of Jehoiada, and Uzziah under that of Zechariah. The lost volume of the law was found, the temple purified, the passover kept, and the abominations of the high places of the valley of Tophet, and the horses of the sun were removed. The king stood by a pillar in the temple and made a covenant with the Lord, and it is written, 'There was no king before him like unto him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.'‡ For this he was permitted to see the downfall of the hostile kingdom of Assyria, and he and his people were happy.

*2 Kings xix. 33, 34. † Isaiah xxxix. ‡2 Kings xxiii. 25.

"But after the death of Josiah, Judah hastened with rapid strides to its destruction under the government of wicked princes. The prophecy of Isaiah to Hezekiah was fulfilled in the days of Jehoiakim. The vessels of the temple and the sons of the chief men of the land were carried away to Babylon. Jehoiakim, his son and successor, was deposed, after a reign of three months, and all the men of valor or property were removed to Babylon. Two prophets, who accompanied their exile, Ezekiel and Jeremiah, were chosen by Jehovah, in these awful times, to make known his word to his people.

"The last king that sat upon the throne of David was Zedekiah, another son of Josiah. He was seduced, in the ninth year of his reign, to rebel against Babylon and to league himself with Egypt. The Chaldeans invested Jerusalem, and it fell, in the three hundred and seventeenth year of the division of the kingdoms. The king was carried to Riblah, and his eyes put out, after he had witnessed the slaughter of his sons. He was then carried captive to Babylon, and awfully was the prophecy of Ezekiel fulfilled: 'I will bring him to Babel in the land of the Chaldeans, and he shall die there; yet he shall not behold it.'*

"The vessels of the house of God, small and great, the treasures of the temple and of the palace, and of all the princes, were carried by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. The youths were slaughtered in the sanctuary, and neither age nor sex was spared; Jehovah gave everything into his hand. All that remained was carried away to Babylon. They burnt the house of the Lord, and the house of the king and all the houses of Jerusalem. And the army of the Chaldeans broke down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

"Thus Jeshurun, the once beloved people of Jehovah, the once glorious daughter of Zion, lay in desolation and misery. The glory of Solomon was scarcely discernible in its ruins; the blessing of David had vanished from his throne, and even

* Ezek. xii. 13.

that which Joshua and the Judges had earned with toil and blood was lost. David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, had called upon them to fear Jehovah, but the superstitions of the neighboring nations had more powerful attractions, and the law was too heavy a yoke for their untamed necks. Hence this awful punishment and unheard of retribution. Prophets were not wanting, to point out and enforce the lesson. Hear how our Jeremiah pours forth his heart-rending sorrows:

How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!
How is she become as a widow — once great among the nations!
The queen of the lands, how is she become a slave!
She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks.
Of all that loved her she hath none to comfort her,
All her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.
She dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest,
All her persecutors overtake her at the borders.
The ways of Zion mourn because no man comes to the solemn feasts:
All her gates are desolate, her priests sigh,
Her virgins are afflicted, and are in bitterness.
Her adversaries are victorious, her enemies prosper;
For the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions.
Her children are gone into captivity before the enemy;
From the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed.
Her princes are become like deer, that find no pasture.
They fall without strength before the pursuer.
Jerusalem calls to mind in her misery the pleasures of the days of old.
Now she falleth into the hand of her enemy, and none help her;
Her adversaries see her and mock, because she must keep her sabbaths.
— She seeth that the heathen enter into her sanctuary,
Whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation.
— See if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow,
With which the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his anger."

"Admirable!" exclaimed Myron, unable to resist the beauty of this lamentation.

Elisama continued: "It is the finest of all the songs of our prophets, and its echo still lives in the hearts of the children

of Israel. This melancholy tone never ceases to predominate in their minds, no, not even in the days of Hyrcanus. What must the prophet have felt when he wrote,

All that pass by clap their hands at thee,
They hiss and shake the head at the daughter of Jerusalem;
Is this the city which men call the Perfection of Beauty, the Joy of the whole earth?

"He had foreseen it all — he had taught them how the calamity might be avoided, but they would not listen to his voice; they had persecuted him, and despised the prophetic word. Now he had to endure the sight of that which he had endeavored to avert.

I am the man that hath seen affliction
Under the rod of his wrath.
He hath led me and brought me
Into darkness and not into light.
He turneth his hand against me every day.

"Jeremiah did not forsake his people. He remained on the ruins of the temple, sitting and lamenting with the inferior people, when Nebuchadnezzar carried away the nobles and the princes. Gedaliah was placed over those who remained. He dwelt in Mizpah, and received those who had fled during the presence of the Chaldees. But scarcely had the hapless people begun to recover from the miseries of war, and to gather in the vintage and the summer fruits, when Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, of the royal blood, came and slew Gedaliah.* The people, fearing the king of Babylon, implored Jeremiah to ask counsel at the Lord on their behalf. After ten days the Lord answered by Jeremiah, that they should remain in the land, and not fear the king of Babylon, nor venture, under severe penalties, to take refuge in Egypt. But they again disobeyed, and betook themselves to Egypt — our ancestors, Helon, were among the number; for what

* Jer. xli.

could individuals do against the stream which hurried them away? By the command of Jehovah, Jeremiah accompanied them thither, that by a symbolical action before the door of Pharaoh's house, he might typify the defeat of the Egyptians and the punishment of Israel. He dwelt in our house, and died there. On this pilgrimage we may well call to mind the words which he spoke; 'Yet a small number shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose word shall stand, mine or theirs.'*

"In the midst of these sufferings Jehovah did not wholly forsake his people. While, by the mouth of Jeremiah he spoke to those in Egypt, Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, was his messenger to the captives on the banks of Chebar. Nearly forty thousand men had been carried thither under Zedekiah; one hundred and fiftythree years before, in the days of Pekah, Israelites from Galilee and Gilead had been transferred to Assyria, and Salmanassar, one hundred and thirtyfive years before, had carried those who remained into the cities of Media. In this manner they were dispersed through the East. But the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel, and in bold and lofty images he announced their return, and the glory of their future days. He foretold too their union, at some future time, after their present dispersion. The prophet was commanded to take two rods, and write on one of them, 'for Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions;' and on the other, 'for Joseph, the rod of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions,' and then to join them together as a symbol of their future union.†

"Thus Israel was not left wholly comfortless: but her sins had been numerous and her punishment was grievous. Driven from their home, cut off from the land of promise, without a temple, or a prince on the throne of David, they

* Jer. xliv. 23. † Ezek. xxxvii. 16.

were taught the power of Jehovah. He had punished no other people so, for he had loved no other so well. As they sat by the rivers of Babel and wept when they thought of Zion, they felt that he was their judge, as well as their lawgiver. What did it avail them, that individuals of their nation rose to favor and distinction, Daniel, Esther, and Tobias, when the nation itself lived in misery and degradation? The seventy years of the captivity were tedious, mournful years, and while a child of Abraham remains upon the earth, their features will continue to bear the traces of that melancholy, which these years impressed upon them. Every year we keep the mournful anniversary of the destruction of the temple, though it has been rebuilt, while, according to the words of Jeremiah, 'we sit solitary and are still.'"

Elisama ceased, and a grief, that could find no vent in words, hung heavy about his heart and that of Helon. The last glow of the departing light had fallen on Elisama's countenance, as he related the destruction of Jerusalem. Night succeeded; by the feeble glooming of the hearth fire, he had described the ruin and misery of Israel; and now all was darkness and silence. The blast of the trumpet, which gave the signal to prepare for the march, at length broke in upon them, and they arose.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HALT AT RAPHIA.

The caravan halted in the neighborhood of the ruins of Raphia; their day's journeys had been short, on account of the quantity of merchandise which they carried. Raphia does not properly belong to Egypt, and was reckoned as a

part of Syria; a hundred years before, Antiochus the Great lost here a great battle with the Egyptians. The space which lies between Egypt and Syria had been for ages past the theatre of war between the adjacent countries; a circumstance that before the captivity, had been the source of frequent calamity to Israel, which could scarcely fail of being involved either in the war or its consequences. This thought occurred to the minds both of Helon and Elisama, as they crossed the field of battle — but they derived some consolation from the thought, that Judea's conqueror had in his turn been conquered here. Jehovah had indeed visited his people with calamity, but their enemies, the instruments in his hands, had always been punished for their ambition. Antiochus after the battle fled into his own kingdom, and left Palestine again free.

When they all awoke after the sleep at noon, Myron began, "Venerable Elisama, will you not relate to us the remaining part of the history of your nation? The journey to Gaza will be the last that we shall make together. Let us then pass these hours in something more improving than listening to the noise of camels and the Phœnicians' talk of buying and selling." Elisama placing himself in a convenient posture for narration, thus began:

"When Israel sat and wept by the rivers of Babel, and hung their harps upon the willows, 'the hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel the prophet,* and carried him out in the spirit of the Lord, and set him down in the midst of a valley which was full of bones; and caused him to pass among them; and there were very many on the surface of the valley, and they were very dry. And he spoke to me and said, Son of man, can these bones live? And I said, Thou, Lord, knowest. And he said to me, Son of man, prophesy concerning these bones, and say to them, Ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and ye shall live! And I

* Ezek. xxxvii.

prophesied, as I was commanded, and as I prophesied they moved themselves, and the bones came together, bone to bone. And I beheld and saw that the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind; prophesy, O son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied, as I was commanded, and the breath came unto them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great multitude. And he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, our bones are dried up and our hope is lost. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord; behold I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.'

"Thus the prophet consoled Israel, on the banks of Chebar; but he lived not to witness the deliverance which he announced. Not long, however, after his death, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, the king of Persia, (who had conquered Assyria and Babylonia) by the means of the astonishment excited in him by the prophecies communicated to him by Daniel. Cyrus caused proclamations to be made throughout all his dominions, saying, 'thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia; the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and has commanded me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah, and build the house of the Lord, the God of Israel. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, and with goods and with cattle, of freewill, for the house of God at Jerusalem.

"'Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all those whose spirit God had stirred up, to go and build the house of the

Lord in Jerusalem. And all that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver and vessels of gold, with goods and with cattle, and with precious things, besides all that was freely given. And king Cyrus brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken away from Jerusalem, and had put them in the temple of his gods, to the number of five thousand four hundred, both gold and silver.' "*

"The word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, respecting the seventy years, was now fulfilled.† Fortytwo thousand three hundred and sixty men, with seven thousand two hundred and thirtyseven servants and maidens, seven hundred and thirtysix horses, two hundred and fortyfive mules, four hundred and thirtyfive camels, and six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses went with Zerubbabel and Jeshua to the land of their fathers out of captivity, full of thankfulness and praise. The expression of their joy may still be heard in the 126th Psalm:

When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion
We were like them that dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing.
Then said they among the heathen,
'Jehovah hath done great things for them;'
Yea, Jehovah hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.
Bring back, O Lord, our captives,
Like streams in a parched land.
They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
The sower goeth forth with weeping, bearing the seed;
He cometh back with rejoicing, bringing the sheaves.

"Thus they returned to the Holy Land, Israel and Judah one rod, according to the words of Ezekiel. They take possession of the country, build villages, and even raise Jerusalem out of her ruins, but without repairing her walls. In the next month, Tisri, the whole congregation assembled at Jerusalem, as one man, to the feast of tabernacles. They

* Ezra i. † Jer. xxv. 11. xxix. 10.

set up the altar upon its base, amidst the ruins of the temple, and offered thereon burnt-offerings, morning and evening according to custom, as the duty of every day required; and afterwards the burnt-offerings of the new moons, and all the feasts of the Lord that were hallowed.*

"In the second month of the second year of their return, they laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, the expenses being supplied by their voluntary contributions. All set their hands to work, and the Levites, from twenty years old and upwards, had the superintendence. The foundation being laid, the priests stood in their apparel, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord with the psalms of David, king of Israel, and they sung in responsive strains, praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, because he is good and his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a loud shout, when they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house was laid. But many of the aged priests, and Levites, and chiefs, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice, and many shouted aloud for joy; so that the people could not distinguish the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people.

"The prophets Haggai and Zechariah arose and encouraged the people to persevere — but difficulties were thrown in their way by the Samaritans, who, worshipping Jehovah along with their idols, had been desirous of partaking in the building of the temple.† As their proposal was rejected, they obtained an order from a king of Persia, a successor of Cyrus, that the work should be stopped. But Jehovah aided his people: the temple was at length completed; and Haggai prophesied: 'the glory of this latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will give peace in this place.'‡ The new temple was dedicated, and the passover kept with joy.

* Ezra iii. † Ezra iv. 2. ‡ Haggai ii. 9.

"Under that Xerxes, whose millions, you Greeks, Myron, boast to have overcome, Ezra, the priest and scribe, a teacher of the word of the Lord, came from Babylon to Jerusalem. An Israelitish maiden was Xerxes' queen, a Jew his prime minister, and Ezra was sent as viceroy to Jerusalem, commissioned to appoint judges, superior and inferior, to correct abuses and enforce the observance of the law. He came with a company of not more than six thousand men.*

"The work, however, proceeded slowly, and incessant wars interfered with it. After thirty years Nehemiah came, as viceroy from the court of Artaxerxes, and urged on the building and fortifying of Jerusalem, which the Samaritans, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, had hindered in every possible way. As Ezra had been the restorer of the worship of God, Nehemiah was the restorer of the civil constitution of Israel. On his arrival, he makes the circuit of the city in the stillness of the night; then addressing the people, he encourages them to labor. Half the young men wrought at the fortifications, the other half kept watch in arms, and the rulers stood behind. If danger threatened anywhere, the trumpet was sounded and the people assembled from every part of the walls; for even the builders wrought with a sword by their side. Neither Nehemiah nor any other took off their clothes except for the purpose of washing them.†

"Thus were the walls completed, and the Levites were sent for from all parts, to give solemnity to the consecration. The priests and Levites purified themselves and the people, the walls and the gates. The princes of Judah stood upon the walls. Two choirs, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, went round the walls, as far as the temple. On the same day great sacrifices were offered, and the people rejoiced greatly, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.

"Nehemiah was compelled to return to court; but he revisited Jerusalem after some years,‡ and labored earnestly to

* Ezra vii. † Nehem. ii. 12. iv. 13. ‡ Nehem. xiii. 6.

induce the people to put away their foreign wives, as Ezra had done at an earlier period.* Their children spoke a mixed dialect, half Hebrew, half the language of Ashdod, Ammon, or Moab. Malachi, the last of the prophets, enforced his advice with the words of the Lord. Such support was necessary, for some of the leading men were involved, and Manasseh, (the son of Joiada the high priest) who had married the daughter of Sanballat, refused compliance. Nehemiah expelled him from the city,† and as Sanballat had just obtained from Darius Nothus permission to build a temple on mount Gerizim, Manasseh became high priest in it.

"Thus Israel had been restored to the possession of the land of their fathers, had rebuilt the holy city, raised the temple from its ruins, and ordered the worship of God according to the law. So far was the law from having been lost in their captivity, that in some parts it had never been fully practised by the people till now. The visitation of Jehovah had wrought the designed effect on the minds of the people. Since the days of Moses, an interval now of a thousand years, they had never manifested such zealous obedience to the law. They had learned, by long and bitter experience, that obedience and national prosperity were inseparably connected together. In their captivity the better part of the people had sought each other out, had formed little associations, and had been strengthened by the words of the prophets, whom Jehovah sent to them for this purpose. These formed the chief strength of the nation which returned from the captivity. Their peculiar institutions, especially that of circumcision and the prohibition of eating unclean food, tended powerfully to keep them, even in the midst of strangers, a separate people; and the glorious prophecies, whose fulfilment they still expected, seemed to belong to them only so far as they were the pure unmixed descendants of those to whom the promises were given. The greater part of those who returned were besides of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin,

* Ezra ix. 10. † Nehem. xiii. 28.

who had before been most faithful to Jehovah, and most closely connected with the temple. The baser part of the people remained behind in foreign lands, just as they do now in Egypt. From this time, therefore, a new period begins in Israel, in which the fruits of the discipline which the people had undergone in the preceding periods are displayed. The voice of prophecy is henceforth dumb; for they had learnt that lesson, which prophets were sent to impress upon them.

"It is true, that those revolutions in the kingdoms of the earth, which are preparatory to the coming of the Messiah, often interrupted the internal peace of Israel. The Persians, from whose subjection Judea was not entirely free, were engaged in wars, in which we were obliged to take part. The expedition of Alexander brought him to Jerusalem, but the conqueror of the world acknowledged the merits of Israel on the heights of Sapha, while Tyre sunk beneath his sword. In the division of his empire, Palestine fell to the share of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, who took many Jews with him into Egypt, and many emigrated thither of their own accord. Antigonus wrested our country from Ptolemy, and for more than a century it was the theatre of war between Syria and Egypt. But these wars were not so much punishments of Israel, as the ways by which Jehovah had decreed to weaken the heathen, and prepare the way for the complete emancipation of his people. This alone was still wanting to their happiness. Israel was obedient and walked in all the ways of the Lord."

"Allow me," said Myron, "to make a remark here. I know how much you dislike interruption, but this will not displease you. On the contrary, it will gratify you to find your own account confirmed by the mouth of a heathen. Hecatæus, a native of Abdera, has written a book respecting your nation, in which he gives them the highest praise for the firmness with which they adhered to their law, when in the midst of foreign nations, in military service, and on other occasions."

Elisama was pleased, and proceeded with his narrative.

"At this time too a work was undertaken, which would never have been thought of at an earlier period; the collection of the oral traditions respecting the law. Antigonus Socho, president of the great council, collected them in a volume. In earlier times the simple law had been found too heavy a burthen; now the people eagerly adopted explanations and additions, by which it was enlarged and made more precise. Such obedience was occasionally rewarded by Jehovah's disposing the hearts of neighboring princes very favorably towards them. Antiochus the Great was so much pleased with the faithfulness of Israel, that he commanded victims, wine, oil, frankincense, meal, wheat, and salt, to be furnished for the sacrifices; gave them wood from Lebanon for the repairs of the temple; recalled the Jews who had left their country, and freed the nation from all tribute for three years.

"Still the yoke of foreign dominion pressed heavily, till at last Jehovah hardened the heart of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, who carried his cruelty to such a length, as to prepare the way for the complete emancipation of Israel. This Antiochus, whom the sirname of Epimanes *(frantic)* would have better suited, bestowed on the wretched Joshua, the brother of Onias the third, the office of high-priest, and allowed him in consideration of an enormous increase of tribute, to open a Grecian gymnasium in Jerusalem, and grant to the Jews the privileges of citizens of Antioch. A strange infatuation seized a part of the people, to witness the contests of this gymnasium; even priests, for this object, forsook their duties in the temple. His younger brother Onias, who took the name of Menelaus, tempted Epiphanes by still higher offers, abjured in Antioch the religion of his fathers, promised an increase of three hundred talents of tribute, and by force of arms installed himself high-priest. A report being spread, that Antiochus had died in Egypt, Jason returned with a thousand men of the Ammonites, and possessed himself of Jerusalem. Antiochus hastened back from Egypt, took Jerusalem, plundered the city, cut to pieces eighty thousand men, and sold as slaves, or carried away captive, an equal number.

He added impiety to cruelty. Entering the temple with Menelaus, he reviled the God to whom it was dedicated, directed all the gold and silver, the table of shew-bread and the candlestick to be carried away, and then offered — I can scarce relate the horrible atrocity, — a swine upon the sacred altar, and sprinkled the whole temple with the water in which a part of it had been boiled. This was not all that Israel was doomed to bear from the heathen. Some time after, being in Egypt, and being compelled to return home by an embassy of the Romans, he vented his ill-humor upon Jerusalem, sent thither twentytwo thousand men, who marched in on the sabbath day, plundered the houses, pulled down the walls of the city, turned the hill of Zion into a fortification, and made the streets of Jerusalem flow with the blood of its inhabitants. The daily sacrifice ceased. The worship of the Grecian idols was commanded upon pain of death; the holy scriptures were cut to pieces or taken away; the temple on Gerizim dedicated to Jupiter Xenius; that at Jerusalem to Jupiter Olympius. On the altar of burnt-offering another was erected to these idols, and groves and shrines of idolatrous worship were introduced into every town. To practise circumcision, or to observe the sabbath, was forbidden on pain of death. Two women were discovered to have circumcised their children; the infants were bound on their breasts, they were led round the whole city, and at last precipitated from the walls. Some had crept into caverns near the city, in order to keep the sabbath — but they were all burnt alive. Every month, at the return of the day on which the king was born, the Jews were forcibly driven to perform a sacrifice. On the festival of Bacchus, they were made to appear in garlands of ivy in his honor. Eleasar, an aged man and learned in the law, had his mouth forced open, that he might swallow swine's flesh; but in spite of force or fraud, he preferred to die, rather than violate the law. A mother with seven sons was taken, and scourging applied to make them eat the unclean food, but in vain. The executioners

then took the eldest of the sons, cut out his tongue, lopped off his hands and feet, and broiled him in the fire, while he exhorted his mother and brethren, who were standing by, to die undauntedly for the law. The other sons shared the same fate, and last of all the mother, who had thus addressed her last son, 'My dearest child, have pity upon me! Fear not the man of blood, but die willingly, as thy brothers have done, that the God of mercy may restore you with them living to my embrace!' What miracles of steadfastness under such torments! Israel was oppressed, as it never had been before; but it stood the trial nobly, and deserved to obtain its perfect freedom, which was at length accomplished in the following manner.

"There lived in Modin a priest of the name of Mattathias, who had five sons, and whose complaint it was that he had been born to behold the oppression of his people and the desolation of the holy city, without being able to give them aid. He rent his clothes, and he and his sons put on sackcloth. When the captains of Antiochus came to Modin, and seduced many of the people to apostacy from the law, and endeavored by promises of all kinds to persuade Mattathias, who was one of the most considerable of the inhabitants, to offer sacrifices and to burn incense, he not only openly refused, but when a Jew, at the close of his speech, went up to the altar and sacrified to the idol, his zeal for the Lord of Hosts was so kindled, that he ran up to him, slew both him who had offered and the captain of Antiochus, and overturned the altar. This done, he cried aloud through the whole city, 'Whoso is zealous for the law and will keep the covenant, let him go forth with me!' This action decided the emancipation of Israel.

"Many followed him into the desert, and a multitude of pious Jews soon collected about him. They traversed the whole country, throwing down the altars of the idols, circumcising the children on whom that rite had not yet been performed, and attacking the ungodly. Mattathias succeeded in maintaining the law against all the power of the heathen.

He was already far advanced in age, and having blessed his children, encouraged them to vigorous resistance, reminded them of the deeds of their fathers, and recommended his third son, Judas, for their leader; and the second, the wise Simon, for their counsellor; he died and was buried with his fathers at Modin.

"Judas, surnamed Maccabeus, or *the Hammerer*, continued the good work which his father had begun. After gaining several glorious victories over the Syrians, he entered in triumph into Jerusalem. And when they saw how the sanctuary was laid desolate, the altar defiled, the posts of the gates burned, the space around grown over with grass and trees, and the cells of the priests fallen to ruin; they rent their clothes and made great lamentations, they strewed ashes upon their heads, fell down on their faces, and blew the trumpet, and cried toward heaven. The priests who were with them purified the temple. The desecrated altar was pulled down and a new one built. The sacred vessels were renewed, a golden lamp-stand, an altar of incense, and a table of shew-bread made. They placed the incense on the altar, lighted the lamps, laid the shew-bread on the table, hung up the curtains, and restored the temple to its former state. On the twentyfifth day of the ninth month, they arose early and offered again according to the law, on the altar of burnt offering, with song and pipe, harp and cymbal. This was the first offering since the time when the heathen defiled the sanctuary. This festival of the new altar was continued for nine days, and there was great joy among the people, that their disgrace was taken away. It was resolved that it should be annually observed, as a remembrance for ever. They then built strong walls and towers around the sanctuary on the hill of Zion. Judas proceeded from victory to victory, till at length he lost his life in an unsuccessful battle, after he had made a league with the Romans. His brother Jonathan followed him, and maintained himself and upheld the law in very difficult circumstances. He was appointed high-priest. The heroic defender of Judea was made prisoner by stratagem

and shamefully put to death. He was great in council, still greater in the field, and those who saw him were compelled to confess that Jehovah had raised him up to be the guardian of the people in their time of need. I saw him in my youth at Ptolemais, at the espousals of king Alexander Balas, of Syria, with the daughter of the king Egypt. There sat the hero, in a robe of purple, among the kings at table, and surpassed them all in royalty of mien.

"Simon, the last of the sons of Mattathias, now took the command of the army. It was he whom his dying father had called the Wise, and commanded his brethren to obey him. For four and twenty years he had served his brethren with counsel, and, though older than Judas and Jonathan, had filled a subordinate station with so much humility, as well to deserve the honor of finally establishing the independence of Israel. He had scarcely erected a monument at Modin, to his father and his valiant brothers, renewed the covenant with the Romans, and sent an embassy to Demetrius in Syria, when the Romans declared Israel free, and Demetrius formally renounced all claims upon them. This happy consummation, by which Israel has been placed securely on an eminence of prosperity unknown before, became an era to us, and we are now in the thirtyfourth year of freedom. The people dwell in the land, serve no foreign master, possess the temple and the law, and fulfil it gladly. Would that this same period had not also witnessed the erection of the Oneion at Leontopolis!

"I cannot refrain from adding a few events of the latest times. Simon retook Gaza; Jerusalem was purified. He besieged the garrison in the castle, and when they surrendered and retired, he entered with branches of palm and the sound of the harp, singing praises to God for having delivered Israel from tyranny, and commanded that this day should be kept as a perpetual festival. He built walls all around the temple-hill, made the castle still stronger, and took up his own residence there. The people, as an expression of their gratitude, chose him as their prince and high-priest, till God should

raise up the true Prophet. While Simon lived, Judah had peace, every man cultivated his own field, the land was productive, and there was fruit in the vine. The elders exercised authority and preserved good order, and the condition of the citizens was greatly improved.

"What shall I say of John Hyrcanus, his son and successor? Thou wilt see him thyself, Helon, in all his majesty; and wert thou, Myron, to see him, thou wouldst never jest again at Israel's expense. While we were enduring in Egypt the cruelty of the abandoned Ptolemy Physcon, and the men of science and eminence in the arts were flying from the country, Israel was happy under its wise and heroic prince. If the oppression of the Syrians was felt for a short time, Hyrcanus soon shook it off, and himself conquered the Syrian cities, Madeba, Samega, and others. He next humbled the Samaritans, and removed that offence of every Jew, the temple on mount Gerizim. He gave the Idumeans their choice, to expatriate themselves, or to receive circumcision, and thus united the seed of Esau with the posterity of Jacob. He has built the castle of Baris in the holy city. He is distinguished, above all the princes and fathers of Israel, by uniting in himself the threefold office which the Messiah is to bear, king, leader and high-priest. At this moment he has just annihilated the power of the Samaritans by the conquest of their capital.

"To such a pitch of glory and to such hopes has Jehovah exalted his people; to him be the praise! He setteth us up on high. Since the days of Abraham, no period has occurred in which Israel was so free and so pure. Great was indeed the splendor of the reign of Solomon; nor can we now boast that silver and gold are like the stones of the street — but in his days neither sovereign nor people were strict in the observance of the law. Now, what zeal, what earnestness for the law is manifested! Our fathers in those days were little better in this respect that the Hellenists in our own.

"I praise my God that he has permitted me to behold the glory of his people, and to feast my thoughts with the con-

templation of it, though I am not permitted to dwell with my brethren in the Land of Promise, under the sceptre of Hyrcanus. How important the present condition of Israel is, may be judged from the long preparations by which it has been brought about, and the difficulties which opposed and retarded it.

> Had not the Lord been on our side,
> May Israel now say,
> Had not the Lord been on our side,
> When men rose up against us,
> Then they had swallowed us up alive,
> When their wrath was kindled against us;
> The waters had overwhelmed us,
> And the proud waters had gone over our soul,
> The stream had gone over our soul.
> Blessed be the Lord!
> He hath not given us a prey to their teeth,
> Our soul is escaped, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler.
> The snare is broken and we are escaped.
> Our help is in the name of Jehovah;
> He made heaven and earth.—Ps. cxxiv.

"The time therefore cannot be remote, when all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in the seed of Abraham and the son of David. The sins which are still found in Israel alone prevent his immediate appearance. As soon as they repent, and keep but one Sabbath as they ought, the expectation of Israel will come. For thus has Isaiah prophesied; 'Thus saith the Lord; my salvation is near and my righteousness is about to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it, that keepeth the Sabbath free from pollution, and restraineth his hand from doing any evil.* He that is promised shall come and that speedily. Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee! The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.'† In this hope, I conclude my narrative, which, long as it has been, is too short for the subject, with that psalm, so full of thankfulness and hope:

* Isaiah lvi. 2. † Isaiah lx. 1.

Praise ye the Lord : for it is good to sing praises to our God ;
For it is pleasant, and praise is comely.
Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem,
He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel ;
He healeth the broken in heart,
And bindeth up their wounds.
He telleth the number of the stars,
He calleth them all by their names.
Great is our Lord, and of great power,
His understanding is infinite.
The Lord lifteth up the oppressed.
He casteth the wicked down to the ground.
Sing unto Jehovah with thanksgiving!
Sing praises upon the harp unto our God!
He covereth the heaven with clouds,
He giveth rain upon the earth,
He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains,
He giveth to the beast his food,
And to the young ravens when they cry.
He delighteth not in the strength of the horse,
Nor takes pleasure in the swiftness of a man :
The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him,
In those that hope in his mercy.
Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!
Praise thy God, O Zion!
For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates,
He hath blessed thy children within thee ;
He maketh peace in thy borders,
He filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.
He showeth his word unto Jacob,
His statutes and his judgments unto Israel.
He hath not done so with every nation,
They have not known his judgments.
Praise Jehovah!—Ps. cxlvii.

"Amen!" exclaimed Helon ; "Amen!" responded Elisama ; and even Myron repeated "Amen!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROMISED LAND.

The way from Raphia to Gaza was travelled with very different feelings by the several members of our party.

Helon, as he proceeded, was constantly looking to the right, towards the hills of Judah, which rose black and dark in the starry night, to the eastward of the road which they travelled along the coast. His feelings grew more intense with every glance; passages from the Psalms and the Prophets perpetually rose to his lips; and all the fatigues of the journey over the stony and sandy soil were forgotten in the reflection, that every step brought him nearer to the Promised Land. The history of his people passed in review before his mind, and his imagination applied everything around him to cherish the illusion. Instead of a caravan of Phœnician traders, he seemed to be in the pastoral encampments of Abraham; with Moses and the children of Israel in the wilderness; in the caravan of the queen Sheba, when she came to visit Solomon; or amongst the exiles returning with Zerubbabel, to rebuild the ruined sanctuary.

Elisama was seated on his horse, his mind full of the glory of Israel which was about to be revealed; in the midst of the bitterness against the heathen, which was become a necessary excitement to his aged heart, and the inward ill-will which he harbored against Myron, he rejoiced in the triumph which he had gained over him by his narrative, which had been so complete, as to force the Greek, at last, to assent to the praises of Israel.

With these feelings they came late at night to Gaza. Elisama, while the tents were erecting, paid the conductor of the caravan the sum agreed upon for the journey. As he intended, according to the ancient custom of his people, to make the journey of the passover on foot, he had already bargained with

some one in the caravan for the purchase of the horses. They reposed for some hours, and rose again before the dawn.

The caravan still lay buried in profound slumber. By the time the camels were loaded and themselves ready to depart, the morning began to dawn, and a singular spectacle was unfolded by it. The camels were crouching in a wide circle around the baggage, the horses, and merchandise; and their long necks and little heads rose like towers above a wall. The men had encamped around fires or in tents. Most of the fires had burnt out, only here and there dying embers occasionally shot a flame, which feebly illuminated the singular groups around. Within the great circle all was still, save that the watchmen with their long staves were going their rounds, and calling their watchword in the stillness of the hour. In the distance were heard the hoarse sounds of the waves, breaking on the shore. On the other side of the camp was Gaza with its towers and ruins; and the fiery glow of morning was lightening up the scene of the fearful accomplishment of the word of prophecy. Gaza, once so populous, magnificent, and strong, when she committed the shameful outrage on Samson, had no longer any gates at the spot where the mighty hero once lifted them up, and placed them on the hill opposite to Hebron.* Jeremiah had taken the wine-cup of fury from the hand of Jehovah, to cause the nations to drink of it to whom the Lord had sent him, and Gaza was amongst them, that they might reel and be mad because of the sword that he sent amongst them.† The shepherd of Tekoah had foretold this in yet plainer language:

> Thus saith Jehovah,
> Three transgressions of Gaza have I passed unnoticed,
> But the fourth I cannot overlook.
> And I will send a fire on the walls of Gaza,
> Which shall devour the palaces thereof. — Amos i. 6, 7.

Zephaniah ‡ had said, "Gaza shall be forsaken;" and last of all Zechariah§ had declared,

* Judg. xvi. 1—3. † Jer. xlvii. ‡ Zeph. ii. 4. § Zech. ix. 5.

Ashkelon shall see it and fear,
Gaza also shall see it and grieve,
The king shall perish from Gaza,
And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

What the prophets foretold against Gaza, which was one of the five principal cities of the southwest of Canaan, Alexander the Great had fulfilled. Her ruins bore witness also to the prowess of the later heroes of Israel, Jonathan and Simon. The city had been originally allotted to the tribe of Judah, and the Philistines never prospered in their unjust possession of it. It was the seat of the worship of Dagon, a monstrous idol, whose lower half had the form of a fish, and the upper of a woman. Helon regarded the city as a monument of Israel's revenge, placed on the very confines of the Promised Land. Today he was to enter that land, and it seemed as if this awful spectacle had been exhibited to him, to impress indelibly upon his mind the transition from the land of the heathen to the land of Jehovah.

Lost in these thoughts, he stood unconscious of what was going on around him. Myron placed himself beside him, and, for a long time, watched him with earnest curiosity. "In good truth," he at last suddenly exclaimed, "this is oriental contemplation! Helon, thou thinkest on Jerusalem!" Helon, disagreeably startled from his sublime reflections, replied, "I was not thinking on Jerusalem, but on that city of the heathen, on which, as our prophet predicted, 'baldness is come.'"

"It is indeed a revolting sight," said Myron, "and your prophet's anticipation has proved correct. But you are about to depart today for Jerusalem. How I wish I could accompany you, and enter this temple, whose magnificence I have heard you describe, along with the train of pilgrims to the passover!"

"You would find yourself," said Helon, "in a more disagreeable situation, than even on the journey from Pelusium to Gaza."

"I should be able to stand my ground nevertheless," said Myron: "I must now however go to Sidon. But I have a plan to propose." He then told him what his own occupations were, and suggested, that as they would probably be terminated about the time when Elisama and Helon would have celebrated the two festivals, he should join them at Jerusalem, and after visiting together some other parts of the Holy Land, they should return to Egypt in company. With the address of a Greek, he contrived to make his proposal acceptable even to Elisama, who, offended as he was at his sarcasms upon the Jewish people, cherished a hope that by knowing them better he might be persuaded to become, if not a proselyte of righteousness, at least a proselyte of the gate. Helon was convinced, that no true peace was to be derived from all the boasted wisdom of the Greeks, and ardently desired that the friend of his youth, who had sought this peace with him in philosophy, might be brought to confess with him, that it was only to be found in the law of Jehovah; and Elisama had often observed that the scoffer is most easily converted into a worshiper.

Myron and our travellers took leave of each other, in the hope of meeting after a few months. He went through the camp to seek for company as far as Tyre, and they took the road to Hebron.

From Gaza two roads conduct to Jerusalem. One passes by Eleutheropolis and the plain of Sephela; the other through the hills by Hebron. Although the former was easier and more customary, Elisama preferred the latter. He had a friend in Hebron, whom he had not seen for many years, and in whose company he wished to perform the pilgrimage; and he was desirous of making Helon's first entrance into the Land of Promise as solemn and impressive as possible. By taking the easier road, they must have gone a long way through the country of the Philistines, and not have been joined by pilgrims, till they reached Morescheth, and then only in small numbers. On the other road, they entered immediately on the Jewish territory, and their way

conducted them through scenes adorned with many an historical remembrance. They had not proceeded far inward from the sea, in the direction of the river Besor, when they reached the confines of Judah; they stood at the foot of its hills, and the land of the heathen lay behind them. Helon seemed to feel for the first time what home and native country mean. In Egypt, where he had been born and bred, he had been conscious of no such feeling; for he had been taught to regard himself as only a sojourner there. Into this unknown, untrodden native county he was about to enter, and before he set his foot upon it, at the first sight of it, the breeze seemed to waft from its hills a welcome to his home. "Land of my fathers," he exclaimed, "Land of Promise, promised to me also from my earliest years!" and quickened his steps to reach it. He felt the truth of the saying, that Israel is Israel only in the Holy Land. "Here," said Elisama, "is the boundary of Judah." Helon, unable to speak, threw himself on the sacred earth, kissed it and watered it with his tears, and Sallu, letting go the bridles of the camels, did the same. Elisama stood beside them, and as he stretched his arms over them, and in the name of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, blessed their going out and their coming in, his eyes too overflowed with tears, and his heart seemed to warm again, as with the renewal of a youthful love. See, he exclaimed,

> The winter is past, the rain is over and gone,
> The flowers appear on the earth;
> The time of the singing of birds is come,
> The voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.
> The figtree putteth forth her green figs,
> The vines give fragrance from their blossoms. — Cant. ii. 10.

They proceeded slowly on their way; Helon gazed around him on every side, and thought he had never seen so lovely a spring. The latter rains had ceased, and had given a quickening freshness to the breezes from the hills, such as he had never known in the Delta. The narcissus and the hyacinth,

the blossoms of the apricot and peach, shed their last fragrance around. The groves of terebinth, the olive-yards and vineyards stood before them in their lively green: the corn, swollen by the rain, was ripening fast for the harvest, and the fields of barley were already yellow. The wide meadows, covered with grass for the cattle, the alternation of hill and valley, the rocks hewn out in terraces, and filled with earth and planted, offered a constant variety of delightful views. You might see that this was a land, the dew of which Jehovah had blessed, in which the prayer of Isaac over Jacob had been fulfilled, when the patriarch said, "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine."* Helon drank of the clear mountain stream, whose sparkling reflection seemed to him like a smile from a parent's eyes on a returning wanderer, and thought the sweet water of the Nile, so praised by the Egyptians, could bear no comparison with it. Elisama reminded him of the words of the psalm;

> Thou lookest down upon our land and waterest it,
> And makes it full of sheaves.
> The river of God is full of water.
> Thou preparest corn and tillest the land,
> Thou waterest its furrows and softenest its clods;
> Thou moistenest it with showers, thou blessest its springing,
> Thou crownest the year with thy blessing,
> And thy footsteps drop fatness.
> They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness,
> And the hills are encompassed with rejoicing.
> The pastures are clothed with flocks,
> And the fields are covered with corn;
> All shout for joy and sing." — Ps. lxv.

"This," exclaimed both together, "is indeed the Land of Promise;" and Helon called to mind the words of the prophet Ezekiel, "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I lifted up my hand to bring them out of Egypt into a land which I had

* Gen. xxvii. 28.

promised for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land that is the glory of all lands."*

These words Helon repeated incessantly as he proceeded. The pure mountain air, which he had never drawn before, inspired the body, as the feeling of home refreshed the mind. This moment, and that in which he had returned to the law, moments of deep and indelible interest, seemed to rise like lofty summits, far above the ordinary level of the events of life. When he thought on the narrative of his uncle, he was inclined to compare the former of these events with the terrific annunciation of the law from Sinai — the latter, with the joy of Israel, when, under the command of Joshua, they crossed the Jordan, and first set their feet on the Promised Land.

During the whole of this journey to Hebron, external impressions seemed to have no other power over him, than to awaken trains of thought, connected with the subject by which his whole soul was occupied. When Elisama pointed out to him Minois and Gerar, which lay far to the south; and reminded him that Gerar was the place where Abraham had involved himself in difficulties by the concealment of the truth from Abimelech;† and where the pious Asa had defeated the Ethiopians;‡ these hints were sufficient for his imagination to cover the plains with the flocks of the patriarch, and the hosts of the virtuous king of Judah.

They passed near Beersheba, which had given rise to the expression so common in scripture history, "from Dan to Beersheba," to denote the whole extent of the Holy Land, from north to south. Beersheba was the frontier town on the south, distant from Dan a hundred and sixty sabbath-days' journeys, or fiftythree leagues. Elisama related how Abraham and Isaac had dug a well here, and called it Beersheba, in memory of the oaths exchanged between them and Abimelech;§ how Jehovah had here appeared to Jacob, and permitted him to go down to Egypt to his beloved Joseph;‖

* Ezek. xx. 6. † Gen. xxvi. ‡ 2 Chron. xiv. 13.
§ Gen. xxi. 3.; xxvi. 33. ‖ Gen. xlvi. 1.

how Elijah the Tishbite had fled hither from the face of Ahab and Jezebel;* how Samuel's sons had judged the people here;† and how, in latter times, it had become a seat of idolatrous worship under Uzziah; in consequence of which Amos had given the warning, "Pass not to Beersheba,"‡ and had denounced calamity on those who say, "The worship of Beersheba liveth."§ At the return from the captivity this was one of the first cities which the exiles repeopled. Notwithstanding the length of the journey, which they performed on foot, Elisama seemed to feel no fatigue; and every hill or valley, every town or village, which they passed, gave him fresh occasion to produce his inexhaustible store of historical recollections. Their road lay by Debir, called also sometimes Kiriath Sanna, sometimes Kiriath Sepher; and it reminded him of the heroic prize, the hand of his own daughter Achsah, which Caleb had proposed to the man who should conquer it.‖

At length Hebron rose before them, and each approached it with characteristic feelings. Helon viewed it only as having been for seven years the city of David's residence;** and could have imagined, that the tones of the sweet singer's harp still lingered about its walls. Elisama longed to see the friend of his youth, and to repose under his hospitable roof. There was an unusual commotion beneath the towering palms at the gate and in all the streets. It was evident that they were preparing to depart for Jerusalem on the morrow.

They were received with the cordial welcome of early but long separated friends. Elisama had scarcely laid himself down, to have his feet washed, when the discourse between him and his host flowed as freely as if the old man had only walked a sabbath-day's journey. Helon observed, that here the ancient custom was preserved of crouching upon the carpet at meals; while in Alexandria they reclined on Grecian cushions. He fell asleep, and night prolonged the dreams of day.

* 1 Kings xix. 3. † 1 Sam. viii. 2. ‡ Amos v. 5.
§ Amos viii. 14. ‖ Judges i. 12. ** 2 Sam. ii. 11.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PILGRIMAGE.

At the first crowing of the cock, all was in motion; their host was making the last arrangements for his departure, the neighbors entered to announce that the march was about to begin. Refreshments were offered to the travellers, and especially to Elisama; but he declared with earnestness that even amidst the idolaters of Egypt, he had scarcely ever allowed himself to taste food early in a morning, and much less would he do so in Israel, and in the city of David, and on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The commotion in the street became greater and greater, and it was scarcely dawn, when they set forth. All the doors of the houses were open, all the roofs were covered with persons watching their departure. Helon, as he passed through the streets of Hebron in the ruddy light of the dawn, and by the palm trees at the gate, was reminded that Hebron was one of the oldest cities in the world, even older than Zoan in Egypt;* that it had been conquered by Joshua, and given as a portion to Caleb, the bravest and most faithful of the explorers of the land;† that it had afterwards become a city of the priests, and had been for seven years the residence of David; that it had been taken by the Idumeans, and reconquered by the Maccabees,‡ and once more incorporated with Judah. But when he had passed the gate, and gained a view of the lovely valley full of vineyards and corn-fields, and looked around on the region where patriarchs had tended their flocks and pitched their tents, and lived in friendly communion with Jehovah, all the high and enthusiastic feelings of the preceding day were renewed in his mind. From all the cross-roads, men, women,

* Num. xiii. 22. † Josh. xiv. 14. ‡ 1 Mac. v. 65.

and children were streaming towards the highway to Jerusalem. They had scarcely proceeded a sabbath-day's journey, when they saw the grove of terebinths; cymbals, flutes, and psalms resounded from the midst of it, and hundreds were standing under the turpentine-tree of Abraham, a tree of immense size and wide spreading branches. Helon entered the grove of Mamre with feelings of religious veneration. Here Abraham had dwelt, here the angels had appeared to him; beneath these trees Isaac had been promised, and the rite of circumcision instituted; here Ishmael had been born, and driven from his father's tent; and not far off was the cave of Macpelah, where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah were buried.* And on this spot, consecrated by so many recollections, the children of these patriarchs were now preparing to depart, on their festal pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The occasion and the place seemed to banish from all hearts every other feeling but piety and good will; mutual greetings were exchanged; friends and relations sought each other out, and associated themselves for the journey, and all faces beamed with joy. "It is time to set out," said some of the elders to the judge of Hebron: "already has the priest asked the watchman on the temple, Does it begin to be light towards Hebron?" The priests and elders led the procession; the people followed, and the slaves with the camels were placed in the midst of them, the Levites had distributed themselves with their instruments among the multitude, and as they set forward they sung this psalm:

How am I glad when they say unto me,
I will go up to the house of Jehovah!
My foot hath stood already in thy gates, O Jerusalem!
Jerusalem, thou beautifully built;
Chief city, where all unite together!
Thither do the tribes go up,
The tribes of Jehovah to the festival of remembrance,
To praise the name of Jehovah.

* Gen. xiii. 18; xviii. 1; xxiii. 17.

There are the thrones of judgment,
The thrones of the house of David.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem;
May they prosper that love thee!
Peace be within thy walls,
Prosperity in thy palaces!
For my brethren and companions' sake,
I wish thee peace!
For the sake of the temple of our God,
I bless thee with good.—Ps. cxxii.

It is impossible to conceive of the soul-felt exultation with which this psalm was sung, and of its effect on old and young. Now the voices rose, like the notes of the mounting lark, on the summit of the hills, now sunk again in the depths of the valleys. How differently did it operate now upon the heart of Helon, and when he sung it before to his solitary harp on his roof in Alexandria! How did he bless the memory of Samuel, who had given his schools of the prophets the harp and the flute;* and of David, who, bred up among them, did not forget them even when seated on his throne,† but appointed Levites for the cultivation of music; and himself often laid down his sceptre, to assume the harp. It was on such a pilgrimage, with such accompaniments, that the sublimity and force of the psalms, and the superiority of Jewish poetry, made itself fully felt.

Helon was astonished at the effect they had upon himself and all around him. The youths and maidens bounded for joy, and tears of pleasure stood in the eyes of the aged. Those who were going up for the first time to the festival looked and listened to those who had already been there, as if to hear from them an explanation of the full meaning of what they sung. The old heard in these festive acclamations the echo of their own youthful joys, and while their hearts swelled with the remembrance of the feelings of their earliest pilgrimage, they beat yet higher with gratitude to Jehovah, who had permitted them, in their gray hairs, to behold such glorious

* 1 Sam. x. 5.; xix. 20. † 2 Chron. vii. 6.

days for Israel, the Syrian tyranny overthrown, and Hyrcanus seated on the throne.

Sublime are the acclamations of a people freed from a foreign yoke! But here was more. It was the fraternal union of a whole people, in the holiest bond of a common faith, going up to appear before the altar of Jehovah, and to commemorate the wonders of love and mercy which he had manifested towards their forefathers. They seemed a band of brothers. "In Alexandria," said Helon, "Jew is against Jew, and family against family — but here is one holy people, loving each other as the children of one Israel, joint heirs of one great and blessed name." Every one had bidden adieu to to the occupations and the anxieties of ordinary life. They had come to give thanks and to pray, and no sounds but those of thankfulness and prayer were heard among them. The hostilities and alienations produced by self-love and the collision of interests appeared to have been left at home, and the general joy dispersed every melancholy feeling which an individual might have been disposed to indulge. On these pilgrimages they seemed as free from care as the people of old, when, rescued from Egyptian bondage, they were fed by manna from heaven, on their way to the land that flowed with milk and honey. Jehovah had promised to protect the whole country, so that no enemy should invade its borders, while the people went up thrice, in every year, to appear before him* — how much more confidently might each father of a family intrust his own household to his protection! Nothing was more remarkable than that the aged and the weakly were able to bear this journey of thirtysix sabbath-days' journeys, over hill and dale, without complaining of fatigue. It seemed as if the strong had given to the weaker a portion of their own vigor; or rather, as if Jehovah himself had strengthened the feeble knees for this journey. They expressed these sentiments, by singing, immediately after the former, the following psalm:

* Exod. xxxiv. 23.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills
From which my help cometh.
My help cometh from Jehovah,
The maker of heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved :
He that keepeth thee will not slumber,
He that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.
Jehovah is thy guardian,
Thy shade upon thy right hand :
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
Jehovah shall preserve thee from all evil.
He shall preserve thy soul.
Jehovah preserveth thy going out and thy coming in,
From this time forth and forevermore. — Ps. cxxi.

It was a beautiful sight, when the procession came from the plain among the hills. The rocky walls, between which their path sometimes lay, re-echoed with their songs. Helon withdrew a little from the line, to an eminence which commanded a view in both directions, and could see the train, covering both the ascent and the descent of the hill, spreading over the plain, and winding like a wreath around the hill beyond.

In every town and village to which they came, they were received with shouts of joy. Before the doors of the houses stood tables with dates, honey, and bread. New crowds of persons, dressed in their holiday attire, were waiting at the junction of the roads, in the fields, and at the entrance of the towns, and joined themselves to the long procession. Here and there before the houses, in the fields or in the vineyards, stood an unclean person, or a woman, or a child, who had been compelled to remain at home, and who replied with tears to the salutation of the passing multitude. It seemed as if the people carried all joy with them from the country to Jerusalem, and only sorrow was felt for those who remained behind. Before a house in Bethshur, stood a fine boy of ten years old. Tears streamed from his large dark eyes, and the open features of his noble countenance had an expression of

profound grief. His mother was endeavoring to comfort him and to lead him back into the court, assuring him that his father would take him the next time. But the boy listened neither to her consolations nor her promises, and continued to exclaim, "O father, father, let me go to the temple! I know all the psalms by heart." He stretched out his arms to the passers-by in earnest entreaty, and happening to see among them a man of the neighborhood whom he knew, he flew to him, and clinging to his girdle and his upper garment, besought him with tears to take him with him, till the man, moved with his earnestness, asked his mother to allow him to go, promising to take care of him till he should find out his father.

"And this," said Helon, "is the object of children's longing in Israel; so early does the desire of keeping the festival display itself!" Brought up in Palestine, he felt it would have been with him exactly as with the child.

They now passed through a wood and then descended a lofty hill whose slope was wholly covered with vines. In the valley before them lay the pools of Solomon. They slackened their pace, and the following psalm was sung:

How lovely are thy tabernacles, Lord of hosts!
My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord,
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
As the bird that findeth her house,
As the swallow, a nest for her young,
So I thine altars, O Lord of hosts,
My king and my God!
Blessed are they that dwell in thy house;
They are still praising Thee;
Blessed is the man who placeth his confidence in Thee,
And thinketh of the way to Jerusalem!
Should they pass through the valley of sorrow,
They find it full of springs.
Blessings be on him who goeth before them;
They increase in strength as they go on,
Till they appear before God in Zion.
O Lord of hosts, hear my prayer!

Give ear, O God of Jacob!
O God, our shield, look down,
Behold the face of thine anointed!
A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.
I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God,
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
For Jehovah our God is a sun and a shield;
Jehovah giveth grace and glory,
No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
O Lord of hosts,
Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee! — Ps. lxxxiv.

They were now arrived at the pools of Solomon, into which the brook Etham was received, and which had formerly supplied Jerusalem with water, by means of a costly aqueduct. The three pools lay on different levels, one below another, on a sloping ground. Around each was a double row of noble palms, in which the whole of this spot abounded. Here, beside the springs in the refreshing shade of the trees, the pilgrims encamped to rest at noon. They had accomplished twentysix sabbath-days' journeys of their march, and ten yet remained.

This aqueduct of Solomon's was a stupendous work. The fountain of Etham, whose waters the pools received, was about one hundred and fifty paces above them. The pools were of an oblong form, the highest one hundred and sixty, the second two hundred, the lowest two hundred and twenty paces in length, and all ninety paces in breadth. The celebrated gardens of Solomon lay beneath these reservoirs, and were a work equally admirable in their kind. They lay in a rocky valley, enclosed by high hills, and were five hundred paces long and two hundred broad. A solitude, which had nothing in it wild or savage, made them a delightful retreat. In the stillness of this glen, amidst fruit-trees of every variety, the king might find a noble recreation from the cares of royalty. From these extraordinary gardens Solomon derived his imagery, when he said, "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse:"* and when he speaks in the same passage of a

* Canticles iv. 12.

spring shut up, and a fountain sealed, we are reminded of the fountain of Etham, which Solomon is said to have sealed with his own signet ring. Both may serve to explain the words of the Preacher. "I made me great works, I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits; I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood of green trees."* Both the reservoirs and the aqueduct appeared, by the solidity of their construction, to have been designed to last forever, and were worthy of the king by whom they were made, and of his times of which the Book of Chronicles declares, that "Silver was in Jerusalem like stones."† Our travellers blessed his memory, as they drank, beneath the shade of the palms, the refreshing draught of the cool rock water. It was just mid-day, the heat of the sun was intense, and all longed for repose and coolness.

After a short rest, the sacks and wine-skins were unpacked from the camels, while others produced their humble stores from their mantles or their bosoms. The upper garments were spread for carpets, on which they lay for rest, or crouched to eat. Now you might see that these pilgrims were a band of brothers. It is true, the very poorest had brought something with him. For weeks before, they had denied themselves, in order to save something for this festival; and on this day at least the command of Moses might appear to have been literally fulfilled, "There shall be no beggar among you." But besides this the rich had provided for the poor a supply of those things which on ordinary occasions they were not able to procure themselves. Some sent to the old men a cup of generous wine, or regaled the children with confectionary fruits. From Tekoah, the birth-place of the prophet Amos, which was not far off, came asses loaded with the celebrated honey of Tekoah; and from Beth-Cherem, celebrated for its wines, others with large and sweet raisins. From the cheerful mirth which pervaded the whole

* Eccl. ii. 4. † 2 Chron ix. 27.

assembly, and the delighful coolness of the water and the trees, they seemed more like a company celebrating, in a fine evening, the festival of the new moon, than a caravan halting at mid-day. No one felt the heat or complained of weariness, except a few aged and weakly persons, who indulged themselves in a short rest.

Behind a hill the walls of Tekoah were discerned in the distance, and beyond it the desert of Tekoah, the free pasture of the bees, for whose honey the town was celebrated. "Does not this scene remind thee of the prophet herdsman of Tekoah?" said Elisama to Helon. "How should it not," replied Helon, "when I see his propheey almost fulfilled before my eyes?"*

In that day will I raise up the fallen tabernacle of David.
And close up its breaches, and raise up its ruins,
And build it afresh as in the days of old,
That they may conquer the remnant of Edom,
And of all nations whom I will consecrate to myself,
Saith Jehovah who doeth this.
Behold the day cometh, saith Jehovah,
When the ploughman shall overtake the reaper,
And the treader of grapes him that soweth seed.
And the mountains shall drop sweet wine,
And all the hills shall stream.
I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel,
And they shall build the desolate cities,
And plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof,
They shall make gardens and eat the fruit of them,
And I will plant them firmly in their land,
And they shall no more be plucked out of their land which I have given them,
Saith the Lord thy God.

They waited another hour in this pleasant valley, till the great heat of noon was moderated. During this time some youths came to Helon, and said to him, "Though you speak our language, you are not a youth of Judah, your turban

* Amos ix. 11.

betrays you." Helon informed them that he was an Aramæan Jew, a native of Alexandria indeed, but one who had chosen Jerusalem, in preference to Leontopolis. They acknowledged him with joy as one of themselves, and invited him to accompany them in a walk around the encampment. Helon gladly accepted the offer.

One group riveted the attention of Helon so long, that he did not leave them till it was near the time of departure. Under almost the farthest palm trees sat seven robust young men, with an equal number of women and several children. "This is Mardochai of Ziph, with his children and children's children," said one of the youths who accompanied Helon. They approached him, took him by the hand, and congratulated him upon being able to go up to the feast, with such a train of his descendants. "Yes," exclaimed the old man, while tears trembled in his dark eyes, "Jehovah hath abundantly blessed me. I see my offspring, like the sand on the seashore—children and children's children, to the number of fifty souls!"

This aged pair had not for several years gone up to the festival: but their children had now persuaded them to appear once more before Jehovah. They had been the last in the procession, and their sons and daughters had been obliged almost to carry them in their arms — a burthen which they had joyfully sustained — for they had refused either to ride or be conveyed in a carriage. "Where could a psalm of degrees be more in its place?" said a lively youth of the company. At the word several of them ran to fetch their musical instruments, and standing around the deeply moved old man, they sung the following psalm:

Blessed is every one that feareth Jehovah,
That walketh in his ways.
For thou shalt eat of the labor of thy hands:
Happy art thou, and it is well with thee!
Thy wife is a fruitful vine, by the walls of thy house,
Thy children, like olive plants around thy table.

Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth Jehovah.
Jehovah will bless thee out of Zion.
Thou shalt see the prosperity of Jerusalem thine whole life long.
Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children.
Peace be upon Israel! — Ps. cxxviii.

During this time others had come up, and soon the news were spread through the whole assemblage, that Mardochai of Ziph was once more among them; and nearly all the pilgrims came and formed a circle about him. The judges and elders of Hebron were among them, and all greeted the venerable pair and wished them peace.

"Ye shall lead the procession!" said an elder of Hebron. "The place of honor belongs to you. The pilgrims of Hebron cannot advance with any blessing better or more rare."

The sons took their father, the daughters their mother, in their arms, the priests and elders followed, and the march began again to complete the ten sabbath-days' journeys which they were still distant from Jerusalem.

Far from the expressions of joy being exhausted by all the songs and acclamations of the morning, they seemed only to be beginning, when they set forward again. From the pools of Solomon they took their way through the hills to Bethlehem. The cymbals, cornets, and timbrels of the Levites struck up their music again, and many a soul-inspiring psalm was heard from the lips of an assemblage now swollen to several thousand persons.

Proceeding in this way they reached Bethlehem Ephratah, "little among the thousands of Judah," and yet so highly honored. Both its names allude to the fertility of the country in which it stands. Bethlehem signifies *the place of bread*; and Ephratah, *fruitful*. In its luxuriant pastures Jacob fed his flocks; in its fertile fields Boaz was reaping when he found his kinswoman Ruth. Here his seven sons were born to Jesse, and here the man after God's own heart grew up, till the day when he came forth to avenge the honor of his people on the boastful heathen.

Bethlehem is a small town, six sabbath-days' journeys from the holy city. It is situated upon a narrow, rocky ridge, surrounded by valleys and hills, having an extensive view over the diversified country in its neighborhood, the region around Jericho, the Dead Sea, and the Arabian mountains. Before its gates you look to the plain of the valley of Rephaim, and all around is the garden of God. The Kedron flows through its fruitful fields, which are thickly set with olives and fig-trees, with vines and corn. But its greatest glory is that of which Micah prophetically speaks, "And thou Bethlehem Ephratah, who art little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall he come forth that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."*

In Bethlehem they met with another company of pilgrims, coming from Lachish, Adullam, and Libnah, which lie westward of Bethlehem. All who could, endeavored to make Bethlehem in their way to Jerusalem on these occasions. It was the city of David, the road passed by the grave of Rachel, and it was dear to many, as the city to which the greatest of all the promises had been given.

The elders of the different cities had soon agreed about the order of the march from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. The venerable pair, Mardochai of Ziph and his wife, were borne before, the elders followed, but without any distinctive badge, and the people arranged themselves as they chose. Some time, however, elapsed before they set out. There were greetings of friends and acquaintance, who met after a long interval; those who had travelled farthest needed refreshments. At length the Levites began their music and their songs, and the people set forward. They had soon descended from the heights of Bethlehem into the valley of Rephaim. As the living stream poured down from the hills, among the corn-fields and mulberry-groves of the vale, this was the praise of Jerusalem which ascended in a mingled strain of voices and instruments:

* Micah v. 2.

They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion,
Which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.
As the mountains are around Jerusalem,
So the Lord is around about his people,
From henceforth and for evermore.—Ps. cxxv.

When they had proceeded about two sabbath-days' journeys, or a little more, from Bethlehem, they approached the grave of Rachel.* At another time this place of the rest of Jacob's beloved wife, the hardly-earned recompense of his labors, might have produced some melancholy emotions, but now such thoughts were banished by the universal joy. Helon remarked to Elisama, that this was not the time of which their prophet had spoken: "In Rama was heard a voice, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children."† "May it be always so with the children of Israel," replied Elisama.

The eager haste of the multitudes now increased with every step, and their impatience for the first sight of Jerusalem was expressed in the following psalm:

Great is the Lord; and greatly to be praised
The mountain of his holiness in the city of our God.
Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole land
Is mount Zion, on the north of the city of the great King.
God is known in her palaces for a refuge,
We think of thy loving-kindness, O God,
In the midst of thy temple.
As thy name, so thy praise reacheth to the ends of the earth.
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.
Let the hill of Zion rejoice,
Let the daughters of Judah be glad
Because of thy judgments!
Walk about Zion, go around about her!
Tell her Towers!
Mark well her bulwarks!
Consider her palaces!
That ye may tell it to the generation following.
For this God is our God, for ever and ever.
He will be our guide, as in our youth.—Ps. xlviii.

* Gen. xxxv. 16. † Jer. xxxi. 15.

Expectation had reached the highest pitch. The last strophes were not completely sung; many were already silent, eagerly watching for the first sight of Jerusalem. All eyes were turned towards the north; a faint murmur spread from rank to rank among the people, only those who had been at the festival before continued the psalm, and these solitary scattered voices formed a solemn contrast with the silence of the rest of the multitude. Helon's heart was in his eye, and he could scarcely draw his breath. When the psalm was concluded, the instruments prolonged the sound for a moment, and then all that mighty multitude, so lately jubilant, was still as death.

All at once the foremost ranks exclaimed, Jerusalem, Jerusalem! and Jerusalem, Jerusalem! resounded through the valley of Rephaim. "Jerusalem, thou city built on high, we wish thee peace!" The children hurried their parents forward with them, and all hands were lifted up to bless.

The high white walls of the Holy City cast a gleam along the valley: Zion arose with its palaces, and from Moriah the smoke of the offering was ascending to heaven. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice. Scarcely had the multitude recovered a little, when they began to greet the temple and the priests:

Bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.
Who stand by night in the house of the Lord!
Lift up your hands towards the sanctuary,
And bless the Lord.
So will Jehovah bless thee out of Zion;
He who made heaven and earth.—Ps. cxxxiv.

They had now reached the termination of their march. The day of preparation was beginning; the following evening was the Passover. From the gates of Jerusalem came forth, in every direction, the pilgrims who had already arrived and the inhabitants of the city, to welcome the new comers from Hebron and from Libnah. The venerable pair, Mardochai of Ziph and his wife, who were still borne in front, received the blessings of all who met them.

Close by the gate, some one from behind laid hold of Elisama; "Art thou Elisama of Alexandria?" Elisama turned round and recognised Iddo, an old and faithful friend of his family. The old men met with inexpressible delight, and Elisama presented Helon to Iddo. The pilgrims had now reached the city, and were dispersing in different directions to their respective quarters. Iddo conducted the strangers through the Water-gate to his house on the open place.

CHAPTER X.

THE DAY OF PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER.

Their reception in the house of Iddo surpassed all Helon's expectations. At the seasons of the festivals, no inhabitant of Jerusalem considered his house as his own. Their city was the city of the whole people, not of the inhabitants alone; and when Israel came up to appear before Jehovah, every citizen regarded his dwelling as belonging to his brethren as much as to himself. Jerusalem lies on the confines of Judah and Benjamin. Its names, the Holy City, the City of the Congregation of Israel, the Gate of the People, point out its destination. No other city was ever in the same sense the capital and centre of a country.

"You are at home," said their host, as he led them into his house; "and at this time, I am not more so than you. The citizen of Jerusalem considers himself equally with his brethren, as a pilgrim at the festival."

In fact the whole house was filled with strangers. Elisama found among them many old acquaintances — but great was his joy when he discovered, in the number, Selumiel of Jeri-

cho, the brother of Iddo. His emotion overpowered his utterance, and he could only press him silently, and with tears in his eyes, to his breast. Schumiel had been the dearest friend of his youth; he had lived long in Alexandria, and they had spent the earliest days of manhood there together; they had imparted each to the other all their youthful plans. At a later period they had been separated, and had not met for more than thirty years; but their hearts had remained united, and their joy at meeting was mutual. Elisama seemed to be changed by the sight of him, as if youth itself had returned with the friend of his youth.

While the feet of the guests were washing, which is the first duty of hospitality in the East, and indeed properly their welcome, Elisama and Schumiel were engaged in uninterrupted discourse, as if they had been sitting alone in the court, and rapidly ran over earlier and later times, Alexandria and Jericho. In the mean time Iddo and some of the guests had joined Helon, and were congratulating him upon his first pilgrimage. Schumiel and Iddo had in common a hearty and straight forward character, by which they might have been known as brothers. But, besides that they were attached to different parties in religion, Iddo had more liveliness and cheerfulness. "My son out of Egypt," he addressed Helon, "tomorrow at this time, when the Passover begins, thou wilt see what thou hast never seen before. Already, on the tenth of the month, I chose a lamb without blemish for the occasion. Before sunset this evening, I fetched the water into the house, with which the unleavened bread is to be made. If you please you shall go with me after supper and seek the leaven in the house. A young Israelite, who has come for the first time to the Passover, should leave nothing unseen, but learn all the practices of Israel in the most complete manner possible. But I forgot, you are come from Hebron today, and must be weary."

Helon seemed almost offended to be suspected of weariness, after a march made under such circumstances. With

glowing cheeks he repelled the imputation, and begged that Iddo would not spare him.

"Just like his father," exclaimed his host, "jealous of nothing so much as of being thought a genuine Aramæan Jew. Tomorrow, I will conduct thee to his grave in the valley of Jehoshaphat. In truth he was a noble-minded man, an Israelite without guile. He died in this house, and it was of thee, Helon, that he spoke to me in his last moments." He then related the circumstances of his death, and many anecdotes of his intercourse with him. Their connexion had been much the same as that of Selumiel with Elisama. Helon listened to him, as if his father's spirit spoke from his lips, so intimate had been their friendship, so similar their characters.

In such discourse the time passed rapidly, and a servant came to call the guests from the cooling fountain of the inner court to the roof, where they were to sup. Here Iddo was accustomed to entertain his guests at the festival, when there was any one among them, on whom the spectacle, beheld for the first time, was likely to make an indelible impression. It was a fine, clear, cloudless night. The moon shone sweetly upon Jerusalem and changed the night to a softer and cooler day than that which had been twelve hours before. A breeze from the Mount of Olives cooled the heated air. The neighbors had in like manner brought their guests to sup on the roofs of their houses, and as far as the eye could reach on every side, feasting and illumination were seen. A busy hum ascended from the streets beneath, and the white tents glistened in the valley of Kedron.

What a scene! The whole environs of Jerusalem were turned into an encampment; all the hills and valleys, all the streets and open places were covered with tents. It was impossible that the houses should contain all the strangers, notwithstanding the unbounded hospitality which was practised on these occasions, and hence it was necessary that a large proportion of them should remain in tents during the festival. In the pleasant season of the year, at which the Passover was held, this had nothing inconvenient or disagreeable in it; it

was the universal custom at the feast of tabernacles, and it reminded them of the patriarchal life, and the wandering in the desert. This gave to Jerusalem a singular but very interesting appearance. All was motion, life and animation, and the thought of the purpose for which these myriads of men had come up from near or distant regions, filled the mind with solemn and elevated feeling. A million of human beings have frequently been assembled here on such an occasion, all for the purpose of appearing with prayer and praise before Jehovah.

Carried away by the sight, Helon involuntarily exclaimed,

> Behold how good and how pleasant it is
> For brethren to dwell together in unity!
> It is like the precious ointment upon the head of Aaron,
> That ran down upon his beard,
> That went down to the skirts of his garments.
> So the dew of Hermon descends
> Upon the hills of Zion:
> For there hath Jehovah commanded his blessing,
> Prosperity for ever more! — Ps. cxxxiii.

The guests gazed on him with surprise. "Why," continued Helon, "do you not see before your eyes the application of the psalm? On such an evening as this, or at least in the view of such a spectacle as this, must it have been composed. Is it not the dew of Hermon, — are not these the sons of Israel from the Tyrian Climax and the plain of Jesreel, which fall here on the hills of Zion?"

"Listen!" said Iddo. Through the uproar of the streets they could discern a distant sound of cymbals, trumpets, and song, which came in the direction of the New City. "The Galileans are entering by the gate of Ephraim; they are late; and yet they cannot this time have been obstructed by the Samaritans; Hyrcanus has removed that obstacle from their way." The distant sound of music and song, heard in this calm, soft night, seemed to Helon even more beautiful than the jubilation with which the march from Bethlehem had been attended. Penetrating through all the tumult of the

city, which he heard not as he drank them in, the spiritual and ethereal tones seemed to him almost like the music of the heavenly host, when they ascend from earth, to keep an eternal festival before the presence of Jehovah. On such an evening, what flight of imagination could be too bold for a youth of such enthusiastic temperament?

The guests had laid themselves down upon the carpets, when Iddo took Helon by the arm. Elisama had been compelled to occupy the place of honor, and Selumiel and he were inseparable. "You will stay by me," said his host to Helon, "and we will occupy as is becoming, the lowest place. Look down below on the square; there it was that Ezra once stood, when the people returned from the captivity, and read the law to them."

"I remember it," said Helon; "it is written, Ezra read upon the open place before the Water-gate, from the morning until mid-day, and praised the Lord the great God; and the people answered Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands, and bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground."*

"Often have I stood here," said Iddo, "contemplating that spot, with its history in my mind, and have thought, with gratitude to Jehovah who has delivered his people, on that AMEN, sent up by the assembled multitude, lifting their hands to heaven. But let us eat and be merry."

Their mirth was such as suited the age and the piety of the company, and their enjoyment was heightened by the expressions of joy which they heard all around them. The old men discoursed of the felicity of the times, and the glorious reign of Hyrcanus; above all, of the victory which his sons had obtained over the Samaritans, and the destruction of the abomination of Gerizim.

In the mean time the master of the house called upon his younger guests to assist in purifying his house from the leaven. This was the evening of the fourteenth day of the month

* Neh. viii. 3.

Nisan, the preparation day for the Passover. Lest the command of Jehovah, to eat unleavened bread for seven days, and to allow no leaven to be seen any where, should chance to be violated, they performed the ceremony of putting away the leaven on this evening. The master of the family gave each of his guests a torch, and led them in a solemn procession though the house. He had himself a dish and a brush in his hand, and he said, "Praised be thou, O Lord our God, king of the world, who hast sanctified us by thy precepts, and hast enjoined upon us to put away the leaven." All present said Amen. They then proceeded to examine every corner of the house, opening every drawer, chest, and cupboard. Here and there lay a piece of leavened bread, purposely left in the way; the master took it up, laid it in his dish, and carefully swept the place. When the company had gone round the house, to the outer door, he said, "Whatsoever leavened thing there is in my house, which I have not seen nor put away, may it be scattered in pieces and accounted as the dust of the earth." The search had lasted two hours; the dish was locked up, and the guests retired to sleep.

Unable, however, to obtain sleep, from the crowd of feelings which coursed each other through his mind, when he thought that he was at length in Jerusalem, in the Holy City, Helon was one of the first who arose. He went immediately to the roof of the house — the Alijah was open; he entered it and performed his morning devotions, with a fervor which he had never felt before, put the Tallith on his head, bound the Tephillim on his brow and his hand, and recited the Kri-schma. His whole body was in agitation; now he lifted his hand towards heaven, now threw himself on his face on the ground, now bent his head to the middle of his body. In the earnestness of his prayer he seemed to wrestle with God. Here in the Holy City, how much had he to ask from the God of his fathers!

When his prayer was ended, and he came out upon the roof, he looked down upon Jerusalem, which now lay before

him in all the brightness of daylight. As yet all was still; even from the temple, which rose in elevated majesty above the towers and palaces of the city, no sound was to be heard. The loud tumult of the strangers on the preceding evening was hushed, and it seemed as if the repose which announced the vicinity of the sanctuary, had diffused itself around and reduced all to silence.

Sallu came to him, to ask his commands. When he had received them, he remained standing a little while and said, "Master, I am only a servant in Israel, but I too am of the seed of Abraham, and I feel that this is the land of our fathers and of their God. Let us not return into Egypt!"

When Elisama arose, his first occupation was to open the baggage and take out thence the presents destined for his host. It was his rule never to come empty-handed, and on this occasion he had indeed come with his hands full. To the mistress of the house he sent all that remained, and it was no trifling store, of the provisions for the journey, some skins of delicious Chian wine, which he had purchased in the caravan, and a quantity of the finest Egyptian linen. To Iddo he gave a turban curiously wrought, of a costly stuff, and an Alexandrian robe of ceremony, informing him that it had been his brother-in-law's, and that his sister had destined it for him.

To Selumiel he carried a book. It consisted of several pieces of papyrus, the stalk of which is divided with a needle into thin leaves, which are then laid together and fastened with the water of the Nile. Several of them were then laid upon each other and fitted together, and on these oblong leaves the book was written. It was an Egyptian invention and very highly prized. "I have brought you," said he to Selumiel, "the Hebrew work of Jesus Sirach, the same which his grandson has translated into Greek. I give it thee for the sake of the passage on friendship. Read here; "A faithful friend is the medicine of life, and they who fear the Lord shall find him. For he who feareth the Lord shall be

happy in his friendship, and as he is, such shall his friend be also."* And here too, "Forsake not an old friend." Selumiel smiled, a thing which he rarely did, and said, "I accept the present, on the condition that you come to Jericho with me, in order that I may be able to return it." "We shall see," said Elisama, "but in so doing I should be giving little, to receive much in return." "Friendship," said Selumiel, "has all things in common."

As our travellers came from a heathen land, it was necessary they should be purified before they could go into the temple. This would have prevented Helon from attending at the morning secrifice, and besides he wished first to discharge a duty of filial piety, and to visit the grave of his father, before he appeared in the presence of Jehovah, whom his father had taught him to honor.

When the ceremonies of bathing, cutting off the hair, and others in which purification consisted, were over, he went forth to the valley of Jehoshaphat, to his father's tomb. It was by his own dying request that he been interred there; for Iddo would fain have given him a place in the sepulchre of his own family. From the words of the prophet Joel, "I will gather all nations, and will bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people,"† it had become a prevalent opinion, that this would be the scene of the general resurrection and of the judgment of Jehovah, and therefore many of the Jews wished to be buried there. It took its name from the king Jehoshaphat, who was said to have been interred in that place.

Iddo, Elisama, and Selumiel accompanied Helon. Leaving the city by the Water-gate, they turned to the southeast and kept along the brook Kedron. Willows and tall cedars threw their shadows upon the graves. They wandered silently along the Kedron, till they saw a large stone, such as the Jews are accustomed to place upon every grave, as a warning rather than a monument, to prevent the passers-by

* Ecclesiasticus vi. 16. † Joel iii. 2.

from defiling themselves unawares. Today, especially, it was necessary for them to keep at a distance of several paces from it, if they would not render themselves so far unclean, as to incapacitate them for taking any part in the religious rites of the day. Helon felt an irresistible impulse to throw himself upon the grave, but the others forcibly held him back. Tears streamed from his eyes as he incessantly exclaimed, "My father! my father!"

They now made a circuit round the city, from the Horse-gate, which lies northward from the Water-gate, till they came to the Water-gate again. The whole circuit might be as much as five sabbath-days' journeys. Their object in making it was rather to give Helon a general view of the different quarters of the city, and divert his thoughts by variety of scene, than to examine any part minutely, which indeed would now have been impracticable, the whole ground being covered with tents.

Jerusalem forms something of an irregular oblong. In the middle of the eastern side, which was one of the longest, rose the temple on mount Moriah. Around the temple lay the city, divided into three parts, built on three hills. Directly behind the temple, in the middle, and due west from it, was the Lower City, on the hill Acra. On the other side, south-west from the temple, the Upper City crowned the hill of Zion; north-west lay the New City, on the hill Bezetha; and a small hill, Ophel, lay southward from the temple. Thus it might be said that the city, though of an oblong shape, lay in a crescent round about the temple.

Jerusalem stood on a very elevated range of hills; the last eighteen sabbath-days' journeys in approaching it were almost a continued ascent. Only towards the north, joining the New City, there was some level ground, on the other three sides it was surrounded with valleys. On the eastern side, where the temple stood, was the valley, which, from the winter torrent which flowed through it, was called the valley of Kedron. The Upper City was skirted on the south side by

the valley Ben-hinnom, where, under some of the last of the kings, children had been burnt to Moloch, at a place called Tophet. On the western side the valley of Gihon bordered the Upper City, the Lower City, and the New City.

Two walls surrounded Jerusalem: one enclosed the Upper City and with it the southern part of the temple; the other began from this, and fortified the Lower City, joining the castle of Baris, which lay above, to the north, near the temple. The New City had at this time no wall. On the first wall were sixty towers, on the second fourteen, each twenty cubits high.

The city had twelve gates, the number which Ezekiel had prophesied on the banks of Chebar. In the middle of the eastern side was the Sheep-gate, which led from the valley of Kedron to the temple. At the building of the walls under Nehemiah,* the superintendence of it was on this account given to the priests, and when it was ended, they consecrated it with thank-offerings and prayer. Higher up towards the north, but on the same side, was the Fish-gate, leading from the valley of Kedron into the New City, and not far from it the Old-gate, leading from and to the same places. It had its name from the circumstance of its not being destroyed, when the others were razed by the Chaldeans.

On the north side was the gate of Ephraim, and quite towards the west, the Corner-gate, both leading into the New City. On the west side the Valley-gate led from the valley of Gihon and Siloam, into the Lower City, and the Dung-gate and the Well-gate into the Upper City.

On the eastern side you entered from the vale of Kedron, by the Water-gate, close to which was the open square, on which Iddo's house stood; and further up, by the Horse-gate and the Eastern-gate, into the Upper City. Lastly, the gate Miphkad, or the gate of Judgment, so called from justice having been long administered there, gave entrance into the precincts of the temple. It was near the Sheep-gate from

* Nehem. iii. 1.

which our survey begun. In the space now described about one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants commonly dwelt, but at the time of the Passover not fewer than a million have been assembled here.

The arrangement of the city bore some analogy to that of the camp in the wilderness. There the tabernacle was placed in the middle, and called the camp of the Majesty of Jehovah; around it were encamped the twentytwo thousand priests and Levites, and round them, in a still wider circle, was the encampment of the twelve tribes, called the camp of Israel. So here at Jerusalem, the temple was called the camp of the Majesty of Jehovah, the exterior courts, the camp of the Levites, and the city, the camp of Israel. Thus the stranger, when he came from foreign parts, to celebrate the festival of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, found here the names and divisions which had been in use among his ancestors in the desert, and the whole city became as it were a permanent encampment, a standing memorial of that wonderful event, which is incomprehensible to those who consider Israel as only under human guidance. By remarks of this kind, Elisama endeavored to divert Helon's thoughts from himself, to what concerned his nation. The names of the different parts and public buildings of Jerusalem had recalled many historical events to his mind; its glory under David and Solomon; its forlorn and ruined state when Jeremiah poured forth his lamentations over its smoking ashes, its new splendor when, under Nehemiah, it arose from its ruins.

On the day of preparation it was customary in Jerusalem to take an early meal, in order to have time for the arrangements necessary before the evening. The time of this meal, however, had been long past, when they returned to the house; the unleavened bread had been already baked and lay on the table, in the women's saloon, and the cakes designed for the festival had been taken from the oven in the adjacent room. That which was the portion of the priest, was of greater size than the rest; it was baked the first, and

lay on a separate table, adorned with flowers. The father of the family was to carry it to the temple in the afternoon. "The first and best of every thing," said he, "belongs to Jehovah; in honoring his servants we think we honor him, and we set apart the first portion for the priest who lives by the law."

A short meal, at noon, was taken under the palm-trees in the inner court, beside the fountain. The greatest neatness reigned in the whole house — all the furniture and vessels, all the floors had been washed. Only the white unleavened bread was seen at table. The pilgrims had eaten it on their journey, but this was the day on which it began to be exclusively used. It consisted of thin flat crumbling cakes, made of water and meal, full of little holes, that not the smallest tendency to acidity might be occasioned. It was the food of haste and sorrow, and they had been commanded to eat it, as a memorial of their being thrust out of Egypt, without time for the preparation of their food.

Immediately after the removal of the dishes and carpets, a fire was made behind the women's saloon, in a small garden belonging to the house. When it blazed up, the guests and members of the family came and placed themselves around it, and Iddo, bringing the dish which contained the leaven, threw it into the fire, saying at the same time, "May all the leaven which I have seen or not seen, which I have brought out or not brought out, be scattered and destroyed, and accounted as the dust of the earth!"

This ceremony had just been ended, and some other trifling preparations for the festival been made, when the trumpets from mount Moriah announced the commencement of the Passover, and a thousand horns, in the streets, from the houses and the tents, replied to the signal. The walls of the front court were hung with tapestry, which had before been suspended between the holy and most holy place. Our pilgrims went up to the temple to complete their purifications, and to show the impatient Helon at least its general arrangement. It was now about the eighth hour.

The ground-plan of the temple had been familiar to him from his youth. The mountain Moriah had an average length and breadth of five hundred cubits; its lowest part was towards the east. As it could not contain all the buildings of the temple, Solomon had carried up a wall of great height and strength from the valley of the Kedron, and filled the intermediate space with earth, thus extending the mountain into the valley. After the return from the captivity, the people are said to have erected huge masses of masonry, composed of squared stones, from the valley, on the eastern, southern, and northern sides, between three hundred and four hundred cubits high.

Iddo led his friend through the Water-gate into the valley of Kedron, that they might receive an impression of the magnificent exterior of this wonderful work, before they explored the interior. They ascended a flight of steps in the outer wall, and by the Beautiful-gate, entered the court of the Gentiles. This court, a square of five hundred paces, had porticoes on all four sides. The double row of pillars on the eastern side was called the porch of Solomon. At its western end, but more to the north, stood the sanctuary or temple, properly so called, with its courts. Strangers from heathen countries and uncircumcised persons were admitted into the court of the Gentiles, but were warned by an inscription, in Hebrew and Greek, on the railing at the northwestern end, not to proceed any further. Behind this railing you ascended fourteen steps and reached a level court, ten cubits in breadth, in which was the house of the exposition of the law. It ended with five steps, leading to a second wall, which on the outside was forty and on the inside twentyfive cubits high. In it was the Lower-gate. Here began a court, called the court of the Women, or the Outer court, one hundred and thirtyfive cubits long and of equal breadth. It was divided by a wall from the next court, the court of Israel, which had also one hundred and thirtyfive cubits of length from north to south, and eleven of breadth from east to west. To go from the court of the Women to the court of Israel, you ascended

fifteen steps, and passed through the gate of Nicanor. Next was the court of the Priests, of the same dimensions as the court of Israel. At its termination stood the altar of burnt-offering, fifteen cubits high and fifty in length and breadth. Beside it was the bath which supplied the place of the brazen sea in Solomon's temple.* At the distance of twentytwo cubits the sanctuary with its triple division arose; being besides twenty-two cubits higher than the court of the Gentiles. Along the sides of these courts were porticoes, and a multitude of considerable buildings; the floor was throughout of marble.

When Helon reached the Beautiful-gate, it was scarcely possible to pass, so great was the crowd of men and lambs. The children of Israel, out of all the tribes from Dan to Beersheba, from the extreme point of Galilee to the desert of Arabia, strangers from Egypt, Cyprus, Syria, Cappadocia, and Babylon, were here assembled in their festive attire. Every master of a house carried his lamb upon his shoulder, or had it driven before him by his servants. In the spacious court of the Gentiles stood vast flocks of lambs and kids, the dealers in which carried on a very extensive traffic at the time of the Passover. The bleatings of the sheep and the exclamations of their drivers resounded between the shouts of joy and the hymns of praise.

Helon passed through the court of the Gentiles, scarcely noticing what was going on there, to the enclosure behind the railing, keeping his eyes fixed upon the altar of burnt-offerings. He looked up the fifteen steps, on which the Levites were already standing with their instruments, through the gate of Nicanor, and gained a view of the interior of the sanctuary. It was like a glimpse of heaven to him. He saw not the riches and splendor of the gold; he felt not the pressure of the crowds around him. A feeling of intense devotion wrapped his soul, and for a time suppressed every other emotion.

* 1 Kings, vii. 23.

His companions roused him, by directing his attention to the court of the Priests. The evening sacrifice, which this evening was killed an hour earlier than usual, was already brought to the altar, the holy place was illuminated, and they were burning incense in it. Helon gazed around him, on the sanctuary, the altar, the courts, and the multitude which filled them, bewildered and overpowered, and incapable of fixing his attention upon any single object in the scene. He did not even notice the absence of the high-priest, whom in his imagination he had always pictured as ministering at the altar, or in the holy of holies; at this moment he was engaged in some of the adjacent buildings, making preparations for the festival.

Iddo conducted Helon about this time into the court of the Gentiles, where the slaves with Sallu were waiting. The lamb must be without blemish, more than eight days and less than a year old. The people had divided themselves into three great bodies in the court of Israel. When the evening sacrifice was over, a priest opened all the folding doors of the court of the Priests, and allowed one division to enter. The priests stood in a row, reaching from the place where the lambs were killed to the altar, each holding in his hand a basin. Iddo was amongst the first. He presented his lamb and mentioned the number of the company who were to partake of it. They must not be fewer than ten, nor more than nineteen. He then drew his knife through its throat, the priest who was nearest to him received the blood in his basin, and handing it to his neighbor, it was passed from one to the other, till it reached the priest who was next to the altar, and who poured the blood upon it. Each as he handed the full basin to his neighbor received an empty one from him with the other hand; thus all was done with incredible despatch.

The father of each family killed the paschal lamb himself. In ordinary cases the priests were the sacrificers, but once in the year the master of the house was himself a priest, as a memorial that Israel was a nation of priests. The Levites in

the mean time sung on the fifteen steps the great Hallelujah, and at each psalm the priests on the pillar, which stands by the altar, blew the trumpet three times. Iddo carried the lamb to the pillar, hung it to one of the hooks, and taking off the skin and the fat, gave the fat to the priest, who salted it and laid it upon the altar. He then carried the lamb home. So did every one of the body who had been first admitted; and when they had all finished, the folding-door opened again, and a second body was admitted. Without the greatest regularity, it would have been impossible in so short a time that such a multitude of lambs should have been killed. Helon descended the steps with Iddo, who had also offered a thank offering; and as he paused at the gate and looked back, he mentally exclaimed, "Better is a day in thy courts than a thousand elsewhere!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE PASCHAL LAMB.

The Passover was now begun. The day of preparation was past; every master of a house had killed his paschal lamb on Moriah, attaining for this day an equal dignity with the highest order in the state, and exercising a sacerdotal function. The festival was called in Hebrew *Pesach*, or according to the Chaldee pronunciation, which was then become universal, *Pascha*, the deliverance, or the passing over. The companies who were to eat the paschal lamb were already assembled, and the lambs were roasting in the deep ovens in the women's apartments.

These ovens were excavations in the ground, about two feet and a half broad, and five or six feet deep. The sides were covered with stones, which were heated by a fire kindled at the bottom, and then the lamb was suspended

within, on a piece of wood running lengthwise. It was expressly commanded by Jehovah, "Ye shall not eat of it raw, nor sodden with water, but roasted with fire."* The fifteenth day of the month Nisan, or Abib (our April) the first of the sacred year, was now arrived. The Jewish day began with sunset, an emblem that primeval darkness had preceded the birth of light, and that all life has its origin in a period of darkness.

When all the preparations were ended, and the Passover just about to begin, Helon hastened to the roof of the house. He looked down upon the open place and up to Moriah and Zion, to the mount of Olives, and on the valleys of Gihon and Kedron. "Wherever I look," thought he, "hundreds of thousands of the children of Israel and the seed of Abraham are assembled to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt. They have come up to the hill where Jehovah had made his name to dwell, and their minds are filled with the thought of their fathers, and the mighty works which the God of their fathers had done in their behalf. Well is it said, Israel is Israel only in the Holy Land." He entered the Alijah, and remained long in fervent prayer. When he came again upon the roof, the last glow of evening over Zion was illuminating the city, and the lamps which were kindled in every house and tent shone through the thin veil of vapor which was spread over the prospect. He lingered on the roof till the golden margin of the western clouds had disappeared and the stars had begun to twinkle in the firmament.

When he went down and entered the inner court, he saw within the porticoes three rooms brilliantly illuminated. It was not possible for all the guests to eat the Passover with the master of the house, because each company was not to exceed twenty. Two other apartments had therefore been prepared for other parties. On such occasions, we have before observed, no citizen of Jerusalem considered his house as his own, but cheerfully resigned it for the use of strangers,

* Exod. xii. 9.

who according to ancient custom acknowledged his courtesy, by the gift of the skin of the paschal lamb. The light was streaming through the lattices of all the rooms, and Helon entered, with a beating heart, that which was appropriated to the use of Iddo and his peculiar guests. A multitude of smaller lamps were suspended from the walls, and one of great size stood in the middle. Costly carpets were spread on the floor, tapestry was hung on the sides, and gold and silver glittered on the divan, though it was not used on this evening; for the paschal lamb was to be eaten standing. The air was filled with the fragrance of Arabian frankincense and the most exquisite perfumes. The women were all richly clad, especially the mistress of the house, who appeared this evening in all her choicest ornaments, a mother in Israel in the city of God. It was only on this day that the women ate with the men; even the men servants and maid servants were not excluded. The whole household of every rank and age, even the children, if they had begun to taste flesh-meat, must be assembled, and all must be Levitically clean. Of the inhabitants not disqualified by uncleanness none were to be absent, but strangers of the gate, hirelings, and all uncircumcised persons: for such had been the command of Jehovah, "There shall no stranger eat thereof."* All the rest were on this night brethren, for all had been delivered by Jehovah from the house of bondage. The bondsman was as the freeman, the woman as the man; and all partook alike of the festivity; all were the people of Jehovah, and equal in his sight.

In the middle of the room stood the table, which in the east is always low, because the guests either lie around it on sofas, or sit on carpets. On this occasion, however, there was neither sofa nor carpet near the table, which stood apart, as if the preparations were but half finished. It was about the middle of the second hour of evening (half past seven) when the company, consisting of nineteen persons, assembled

* Exod. xii. 43.

around the table. Every one, though splendidly clad, appeared prepared for a journey. With sandals on their feet, which at other times were not worn in a room, but given to the slaves to be placed at the door, with their garments girt, and staff in their hands, they surrounded the table. A large vessel filled with wine stood upon it, and the meal began by the master of the house blessing it. He laid hold of it with both hands, lifted it up with the right and said, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, thou king of the world, who hast given us the fruit of the vine;" and the whole assembly said, "Amen." Next he blessed the day, and thanked God for having given them the Passover: and then, drinking first himself from the cup, sent it around to the rest. When this was over, he began again; "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, thou king of the world, who hast sanctified us by thy precepts, and commanded us to wash our hands." He and the whole company then washed their hands in a silver basin, with water poured from an ewer of the same metal. This was the emblem of purification, and implied, that every one should come with a pure heart, as well as clean hands, to partake of the paschal meal. The unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, a vessel with vinegar, the paschal lamb, were placed upon the table. The master of the house then spoke again; "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, who hast given us of the fruits of the earth." He dipped some of the herbs in vinegar, and the whole company did the same. At this moment, the mistress touched her little grandson, a child of ten years old. Children were always present at this festival, and one design of its establishment was, that the son should learn from the lips of his father the event to which it referred, and the remembrance of it might be thus propagated to the most distant posterity.* The child understood the hint, and asked his grandfather, why on this night alone the guests stood around the table, instead of sitting or lying. With dignity and solemnity, the grandfather, turning to the

* Exod. xii. 26.

child, related to him how their forefathers had been oppressed in Egypt, and how the Lord had brought them out thence with a mighty arm. He described to him the evening which preceded their flight from Goshen, their busy preparation, and their anxiety to conceal it from the Egyptians. The lamb was slain and the blood sprinkled on the door-posts, that the destroying angel of the Lord might pass by their houses when he slew the first-born of the Egyptians. It was to be roasted, not boiled, that it might be sooner ready; it was to be eaten in a standing posture, as by men prepared for instant departure; it was to be consumed entire, for the whole people were to quit their dwellings and never to return to them; and no bone of it was to be broken, for this is the act of men who have time and leisure for their meal.

The bitter herbs were then eaten, and the 113th and 114th psalms were sung. This formed the first half of the great song of praise, which was called emphatically the Hallel, consisting of six psalms, from the 113th to the 118th, sung on all great festivities. A second washing of the hands followed, the cup was a second time blessed and sent round. The master broke off a piece of the unleavened bread, wrapped it in the bitter herbs, and, having dipped it in the vinegar, ate it, and then distributed a portion to each of the company, who did the same; and now the eating of the lamb began, in which the paschal feast properly consisted. Along with the lamb the boiled flesh of the thank offering, which Iddo had made in the temple, was placed upon the table, and blessed by the master of the house. The lamb was wholly consumed, it being forbidden by the law that any part of it should remain till the next day. If any part were not eaten, it was to be burnt. The bones were not to be broken, for everything was to remind them of their hasty flight from Egypt.

Festivity and cheerful conversation now reigned among the whole assemblage. Whether it be that a people, which had suffered so much calamity and oppression, naturally enjoys the more keenly a temporary interval of pleasure, or that every approach to God is to the pure mind a source of joy

and peace, certain it is, that no nation has ever more carefully studied to remove all trace of sorrow from religious services than the Jews. How earnestly do Ezra and Nehemiah exhort the people to lay aside their mourning, when the law was read at the feast of tabernacles, and the curse on its violation made known! "This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not nor weep; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet; for this day is holy unto the Lord."*

The company at Iddo's house were not unmindful of these precepts, and the time passed on rapidly in animated discourse. The servants were not excluded from their share; the innocent playfulness of the children was not repressed, and the gaiety of the females lent wings to the conversation. Iddo was the most animated of all, and Helon thought he had never seen an old man so full of vivacity. "See, thou mother in Israel," said he to his wife, "the Lord has blessed us and permitted us to keep one Passover more, before we are gathered to our fathers. Let us thank him for his mercy, by the cheerfulness with which we celebrate it."

All present congratulated the venerable pair, and Iddo continued, "Why didst not thou, Selumiel, bring thy wife and Sulamith, who is lovelier than the fairest rose of Jericho? A prize for some fortunate youth, for as Solomon has said 'A virtuous wife is more precious than pearls.'"

"What would Israel be," said Elisama, as the sounds of festivity from the adjacent apartments penetrated into theirs, "what would Israel be without the festivals of Jehovah? Here we are all assembled before the Lord, to praise his faithfulness which is great, and his mercy which is renewed every morning. What compared with these are the Grecian Games at Olympia and Nemea? Would that Myron were here! We children of Israel are *one* people; we have *one* God, and *one* city of the Lord; and every Jew in Egypt, Asia, Syria, and Chaldea, always turns his eyes in his prayers

* Neh. viii. 9.

towards this one place. Think, my friends, that while so many hundreds of thousands are assembled in Jerusalem, millions in the remotest countries, into which our people has been scattered, cast longing looks this evening towards us, envying us our joy, and desiring nothing more, than to be in the Holy City and in the courts of Jehovah! I only regret that Gerizim and Leontopolis —"

"Hush," interposed Iddo, "today speak only of pleasing subjects. Our prince has subdued the rebellious daughter Gerizim. Jehovah ceases not to concern himself with the injuries of Joseph."

"The prophet," replied Elisama, "has declared that all the nations of the earth shall be united in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and when the Messiah comes the sceptre of Judah shall be extended over the whole earth."

"Hyrcanus stands beside the altar," said another of the company, "and the family of the Maccabees is flourishing. Who knows whether the Messiah will not speedily appear from among them?"

"No," said Elisama, "the Messiah must come from the family of David, and the Maccabees are Levites of the family of Jojarib. The Jewish people and the priests consented that Simon should be their prince and high-priest, till God raised up the true prophet unto them. The Messiah, therefore, will not be a Maccabee, though Hyrcanus unites in himself the three offices to which he will be anointed. But would that he who is promised were come! His way is prepared; Israel is once more free, and a people. What would I give, if in my grey hairs I might yet be permitted to behold him! What a glorious passover will that be, when He keeps it with us, in Baris or on Zion, and his people accompany him with palm branches and Hosannas! I envy you, Helon, for you may live to see that day."

"It will be a happy day," said Helon, "but not more happy than this." The old men smiled at his enthusiasm, and rejoiced that among the youth of Israel there should be such joy in keeping the festivals of Jehovah.

It was now become late. The hired servants, stationed by the waterclock in the court, called the fifth hour of night, and the paschal meal was not permitted to last longer than to the end of the first watch of the night, which terminated somewhere about an hour before midnight. There were two other watches between this and daylight, divided by the two cock-crowings. They heard the guests in the other apartments reciting the song of praise, and hastened to conclude. With the same prayer as before, they washed their hands again from the silver basin, and Iddo, having again blessed the cup, they drank once more from it. This was called the cup of thanksgiving. The second part of the Hallel was now sung, consisting of the 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th psalms. Helon thought of the words of Isaiah, "Ye shall sing as on the night of a holy feast, and rejoice in your hearts as when they go with a pipe to the mountain of the Lord, to the refuge of Israel."* When the Hallel was finished, hands were again washed, and the cup was blessed and sent round for the fourth and last time. Helon would gladly have joined in praying the great Hallel, as they call the series of psalms from the 120th to the137th, after which it was customary to send round the cup a fifth time, but midnight was already too near. The company broke up, and all retired to rest, designing to be early in the temple on the following day.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DAY AFTER THE PASSOVER.

While the paschal lamb was eaten by the people, the priests in the temple were cleansing the altar of burnt-offering. This was commonly done in the last watch of the night, to-

* Isaiah xxx. 29.

wards the cock-crowing, but on this occesion during the first. Next they themselves partook of the paschal lamb, and soon after midnight the gates were opened, for the ingress of the children of Israel, many of whom were there even at this early hour, in order to see the splendor of the illuminated temple. As soon as the watchman had answered in the affirmative the customary question of the priest, "Does it begin to be light as far as Hebron?" all the streets leading to the temple were filled with men, dressed in their gayest clothes. On no other occasion of the year was the temple so crowded as on the morning after the Passover.

The usual morning sacrifice was first of all offered. The lamps were extinguished, incense was burnt upon the altar, and the lamb was sacrificed to Jehovah, with the usual meat and drink offering. Then followed the special offering for the feast, two young bullocks, a ram, seven yearling lambs with meat and drink offerings. Next, a goat was offered as a sin-offering; the Hallel was sung, and the blessing pronounced. The whole body of the priests was assembled; on ordinary days, only some families of the fathers were present; on the sabbath the whole course; but on high festivals the whole twentyfour courses, the collective body of the priesthood.

Helon had been among the first who had come up to the temple of Jehovah, at the crowing of the cock. He beheld all with deep interest and profound devotion, and as he gazed on the temple and the splendid ritual performed in it, the fond wish of his early childhood awoke in his heart, that he too might be thought worthy to become a priest of Jehovah and to minister at his altar. With increasing eagerness he looked for the appearance of the high-priest, the head and crown of the tribe of Levi and of all Israel. He had expected him to appear yesterday, and during the morning sacrifice, but he had not shown himself. Helon felt an enthusiastic admiration for the heroic family of the Maccabees, and none of them all had risen to such an eminence as John Hyrcanus.

In Egypt, in Hebron, on the pilgrimage and through the whole preceding day, he had been hearing the praises of the man whom he was now about to see.

He was standing upon the lowest of the fifteen steps, which led from the court of Israel to that of the women, when there arose a cry among the thousands who surrounded him, "The high-priest is coming!" He came from an adjoining building and walked towards the altar. The breastplate with its precious stones beamed from his breast. Over the ordinary white robe of the priests, which descended in folds to his feet, he wore a magnificent upper robe of a blue purple. The bells between the pomegranates, on the borders of his robe, gave a clear sound as he walked. Over this upper garment he had a third, which was shorter, called the ephod, splendidly embroidered with purple, dark blue, crimson and thread of gold, on a white ground. On his head was a white turban, and over this a second, striped with dark blue. On his forehead he wore a plate of gold, on which the name of Jehovah was inscribed; and being at once high-priest and prince, this was connected with a triple crown on the temples and back part of the head.

The priests made way for him, as he entered in his glory, and stepped in majesty along. Arrived at the altar, he looked around on the innumerable multitude that were assembled, while silent congratulations were addressed to him by every heart. Helon thought on the splendid description of the high-priest Simon, the son of Onias, in the book of Jesus the son of Sirach.*

The mere description had often awakened the enthusiasm of Helon, but now he saw it realized, in the most impressive service ever performed in Israel — that of the morning after the Passover. There stood the high-priest, spiritual and temporal sovereign of the people, on the mountain of Jehovah, in sight of his sanctuary, and looked through the lofty portico, full upon the curtain of the most holy place. On

* Ecclesiasticus i.

the other side, through all the courts even to the foot of mount Moriah, was a countless multitude, all occupied with prayer and praise, all waiting anxiously for his blessing, and expecting to be purified by his offering. Around him were all the priests of Israel, obedient to his nod, ministering to him in the most sacred employment of the people, their appearance before Jehovah. He himself, the man who bore the name of Jehovah on his brow, with everything that oriental splendor could accumulate, lavished on him, in honor of that name, surrounded by the flames of the altar of burnt-offering, which flashed up to heaven! It was a sight to awaken every sublime religious feeling of such a mind as Helon's.

The Hallel was sung. The priests, stationed on the pillars near the laver, accompanied the song with the sound of their trumpets, and the Levites on the fifteen steps sung it, with their cymbals, cornets and flutes. David had appointed four thousand Levites for musicians and singers, and their number was probably not much smaller now.* The multitude responded, with its hundred thousand voices, to the song of the choir; and when the Hallelujah, with which the psalms begin and end, was thrice repeated with the united volume of vocal and instrumental sound poured forth at once, a less lively imagination than Helon's might have fancied that Jehovah himself appeared in the flames of the altar, to receive the homage of his people. It was here only that one of these psalms, so full of the boldest flights and of the deepest emotion, must be heard, to be fully felt.

Helon was so absorbed, that the wave of the people had forced him, unconscious of it, far down to the extremity of the court. He could only see from a distance the movements of the high-priest about the altar. His majestic figure, as he passed to and fro before the flames which arose in the back ground, received from them a strong illumination, which to Helon's fancy gave something solemn and unearthly to the form. When the sacrifice and the Hallel were ended, the

* 1 Chron. xxiii. 5.

people fell on their knees, and bowed their faces to the earth to receive the high-priest's blessing. He washed his hands with the usual solemnities, and advanced to the steps of the Levites, praying thus; "Praised be thou, O Lord our God, thou king of the world, who hast sanctified us with the consecration of Aaron, and commanded us to bless thy people Israel in love." He then turned first to the sanctuary and afterwards to the people; then lifting his arms to the height of his shoulders, and joining his hands together, so as to leave intervals between the fingers, with eyes cast down on the ground, he laid the name of Jehovah on the people and said,

The Lord bless thee and keep thee,
The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.
The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee and give thee peace! — Num. vi. 24.

At every repetition of the word *thee*, he turned to the north and the south. The people replied; "Praised be the name of his kingdom for ever!" They continued a while when the benediction was concluded, each praying to himself, while the high-priest, turning to the sanctuary, said, "O Lord of the whole world, we have done what thou hast commanded us, and thou wilt do what thou hast promised. Thou wilt behold us from the habitation of thy holiness; thou wilt look down from heaven and bless thy people Israel!"

The offerings which were now concluded had a reference to the whole people; it remained that individuals should offer for themselves, both thank-offerings and burnt-offerings, in order not to appear empty-handed before Jehovah. The thank-offerings might only be offered on this day, the burnt-offerings on the following day also.

They remained together till the evening sacrifice, and Helon did not leave the temple till after it, in order that he might witness the ceremony of the wave-sheaf. This is the commencement of harvest, which begins at the time of the Passover, with the barley (in the warm valley of the Jordan

still earlier) and is finished about Pentecost, with the wheat. Everything which concerned the people of Israel, the harvest especially, must begin and end with religious solemnity.

At sunset, the citizens who had been appointed to cut the wave-sheaf by the Sanhedrim, came down through the courts, accompanied by a great concourse of people, and Helon joined in the procession. They went to the nearest field of barley before the city: the sixteenth of Nisan was begun, and the evening star was already visible in the sky. The person who was appointed to reap asked aloud, "Is the sun gone down?" The people who stood around answered, "Yes." "Shall I cut." "Yes." "With this sickle?" "Yes." "In this basket?" "Yes." The question, thrice repeated, being thrice answered in the affirmative, he cut as much as would furnish an omer, and binding the sheaves together, carried them to the temple. The barley was then roasted by the fire, cleared from the husk, ground into meal, and the omer* of the finest meal was kept till the following day.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REMAINING DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD.

It was the morning of the second day after the Passover. Helon arose, performed his devotions in the Aliyah, saluted Moriah and Zion from the roof, and they all went together to the temple to pray. After the usual morning sacrifice of a lamb, followed, as the day before, an offering appropriate to the festival, of two young bullocks, a ram, and seven yearling lambs, as a burnt-offering; and a goat, as a sin-offering. The high-priest ministered as before at the altar, and the priests

* *Omer*, a little more than five pints.

around him. The crowd was scarcely less than yesterday, and nearly the same ceremonies were repeated.

Next followed the offering of the first-fruits, the omer of barley-meal which had been prepared from the sheaves, cut the preceding evening. A priest fetched the meal, in a golden dish, from an apartment in one of the buildings, mixed it in the presence of the people with a *log** of the finest oil, and scattered upon it a handful of incense. He brought it to the high-priest, who stood beside the altar, and he waved it towards all the four winds, from east to west and from south to north, and then ascended the altar. On the southern side lay salt, with which he salted the meal and threw a handful of it, with another of incense, upon the flame. Immediately after, a special sacrifice, a lamb with the meat and drink offering that belonged to it, was offered; and the high-priest concluded by giving his benediction. The harvest was now solemnly begun, and Israel might pursue its joyful labors. The spectators dispersed themselves in different directions; and many of the pilgrims, who had neither time nor means to spend the whole week of the festival in Jerusalem, returned home on this day.

Only those remained behind, who purposed to offer the burnt-offerings of the appearance before Jehovah, and these were the wealthier part of the worshippers. Elisama, Helon, and Sallu went down into the neighborhood of the porch of Solomon, to purchase a victim for this purpose. A dealer in cattle, from Capernaum in Galilee, furnished them with a calf of extraordinary beauty, which they drove to the gate on the northern side, at which the sacrifices were admitted. Here they were compelled to wait a considerable time, as a large number had been admitted just before their arrival. At length they entered: the animal was examined and killed on the north side of the altar, the offerers having first washed their hands, and laid them upon it. The priests received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. The sacrificers then

* *Log*, five sixths of a pint.

took off the skin, took out the fat, and the entrails, and divided the flesh. The whole was given to the priest, along with the meat and drink offering; he salted it and threw it into the fire. A burnt-offering was to be wholly consumed, except the skin, which belonged to the priest. While the priest was sacrificing at the altar, Elisama, Helon, and Sallu were praying that Jehovah would graciously accept their offering; and when it was ended, they and the rest of those who had been admitted with them, went out at the southern gate. Helon, while he had witnessed the solemn ceremonial and the deep and reverent silence of the spectators, had felt the dignity of the priestly office, and as he prayed, he said with David,

> One thing I desired of the Lord, that I will seek after;
> To dwell in the house of the Lord, as long as I live,
> To behold the glorious worship of the Lord,
> And to wait in his temple! — Ps. xxvii. 4.

In the afternoon Iddo conducted him to one of the places of public instruction, called by the Greek name of Synagogue. Such buildings had come into use only since the captivity, but there were already a considerable number of them in Jerusalem. In the days of David and Solomon we find no trace of them. It is true, we find very early mention of the schools of the prophets, from which they may be considered to have taken their rise. In the days of Elisha it was customary to visit the prophets on the day of the new moon and on the sabbath.* In the captivity, the people must have felt the necessity much more of assembling on solemn days, to obtain consolation and hope from the discourses of some man learned in the scriptures. On the fifth day of the sixth month, it happened, we are told in the book of the Prophet, that Ezekiel "was sitting in his house, and the elders of Judah were sitting before him."† After the return from the captivity, this custom was kept up, from the experience of its

* 2 Kings iv. 23. † Ezek. viii. 1.

utility; and these assemblages were held at first in the porticoes of the temple, afterwards in buildings appropriated to the purpose. Sacrifices could be offered only in one place, the temple, but prayer might be offered, and instruction communicated, any where.

They went into a synagogue in the Lower City, where an eloquent expounder of the law was accustomed to teach. The arrangement of the building had a good deal of resemblance to that of the temple. A large quadrangular space was surrounded on all sides with covered walks or porticoes, resting upon a double row of columns. In the middle, a circular roof rested upon four pillars, and beneath it, on a raised place, lay the rolls of the law. The people stood upon the open space, which was covered with an awning, and in rainy weather took shelter in the porticoes, one of which was set apart exclusively for the women. Before the rolls of the law stood the reader and expounder, who was also called the apostle or ambassador of the assembly. He read the law and the letters of other congregations; he delivered the prayer, and thus, as it were, was the messenger of the people to God, and the interpreter of their desires. Besides him there was also a ruler of the synagogue, or superintendent of the school, who maintained order, several elders of the congregation who assisted him in his functions, a gatherer of alms, and a servant. Any one who chose, not excepting strangers, might stand up and teach.

The synagogue was already full when Helon and his friends entered it, and after the usual salutation, the service began by praising God. The reader then going up to the rolls, which lay under the circular roof, read a passage from the law, which he at the same time interpreted to the people. After a second ascription of praise, he read a passage from the prophet Jeremiah, and translated it into the common dialect of the country. The celebrated teacher of the law, whom we have mentioned, then rose up, and proposed to deliver a discourse.

Myron had objected to his friend Helon, that the people of

Israel were destitute of skill in all the fine arts; and in respect to eloquence, resembled their lawgiver, who was "slow of speech and of a slow tongue."* To the former part of the imputation Helon had already replied; to the latter he might have answered, that although his nation never possessed an Isocrates or a Demosthenes, no people ever had orators, whose eloquence was more vigorous, animated, or spirit-stirring than the prophets in Israel. What artificial rhetorician, of the schools or the Agora, ever graved his words so deep in the hearts of his hearers as they did? They spoke the word of Jehovah, by the command and inspiration of Jehovah; the Greeks, the words of human wisdom, at the suggestion of vanity, or to promote the purposes of ambition. How different is the effect of a discourse, in which a divine power dwells, from those which have been composed with the strictest adherence to the rules of art!

Such might have been Helon's answer to his friend; for such was his own experience, in listening to the orator in the synagogue. His language was simple and unartificial, but for this very reason the energy of the prophet's words, which he expounded, was the more strongly felt. First of all he went through the passage which had been read, and explained the contents of the prayer, which, sublime in itself, was still more so from the circumstances in which it was spoken. He painted the forlorn condition of the people when the land fell into the hands of the Chaldeans, and the prophecy which was involved in the purchase of the field of Anathoth. When he came to speak of the signs and wonders which Jehovah had shown in Egypt, and of his having brought out his people with an out-stretched arm, he pointed out to the audience, that this great deliverance was to be regarded as an everlasting pledge of his redeeming mercy. For a thousand years past it had served this purpose, and every Passover revived and strengthened the impression. He painted to them the condition of Israel in Goshen, their inhuman op-

* Exod. iv. 10.

pressions, the evening of the first Passover, their wanderings in the wilderness, their rebellions against God, and the firmness of their lawgiver. Thence he passed rapidly to the glorious days of the first temple, and described the magnificence of Solomon and the prosperity of Israel, while the eyes of all his audience glistened with sympathetic delight. Next he spoke of the captivity in Babylon, of the silent tears of the people as they sat by the streams of the Tigris and Euphrates, and of the evening of the Passover, when the fourteenth day of Nisan came and no paschal lamb could be eaten, but only the unleavened bread. No one drew his breath while he delineated the picture of this misery. "Unhappy, forsaken people!" he exclaimed; "ye had sinned and Jehovah visiteth the iniquities of the fathers upon their children. O thou almighty and jealous God, thine eyes are open on all the ways of the children of men!" He paused for a moment, as if overpowered by the contemplation of the might and justice of Jehovah. Every bosom was agitated. "Wo, wo to me and to my children!" exclaimed at once a woman, so carried away by the words of the speaker, that she forgot herself and the presence of the multitude. "Wo to us all," resumed he, "if we forsake Jehovah, the living fountain, and hew out to ourselves broken fountains which hold no water." In conclusion he praised the restoration of the worship of God, and the happy times in which they lived; and earnestly exhorted them to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread and of the appearance before Jehovah, with becoming gratitude, and faithfully to observe the law, in the land flowing with milk and honey into which he had brought them.

When the discourse was ended, praise was again ascribed to God, and the prayer called Kri-schma repeated. This was a feast-day; but independently of this, it was the duty of every adult Jew, on the second and the fifth day of the week, as well as on the sabbath, to pray with the Tallith on his head, and the Tephillim on his brow and on his hand. The benediction was given, to which the assembly replied Amen! and at the close of all, alms were collected for the poor.

As they left the assembly, Helon remarken to Elisama, how much superior, in regard both to sacrifice and instruction, was the condition of Israel to that of the heathen. They offer sacrifice to their gods — but they are ignorant of the law; they have temples and altars, but no houses of religious instruction; they have priests, but none to explain their duty to them. On the following day, the third after the Passover, the same offerings were made as before; but the evening increased the solemnity, by the approach of the sabbath. It was announced as usual by six blasts of the trumpet, blown by a priest out of the chamber which was situated on the southern side of the temple, at the extremity of the court of Israel, and which served at the same time for the watch-room of the priests and Levites. In the country towns the annunciation was made by blasts of the horn. At the ninth hour (three in the afternoon) the first blast was sounded, as a signal for the cessation of all labor in the field. Troops of reapers and other laborers were immediately after seen coming from all the adjacent country into Jerusalem. At the tenth hour, the second blast was sounded, to announce the time of closing the shops and manufactories, completing the domestic preparations for the sabbath, and putting on their best attire. In every house, two loaves were placed upon the table, as a memorial of the double measure of manna, gathered in the wilderness on the day before the sabbath. At the third blast, the mother of the family lighted the two lamps, which were to burn through the whole of the sabbath. Light, being the symbol of joy and of knowledge, was appropriate to such a solemnity: hence the altar blazed, and the household lamp was kindled. The mother, assuming the priestly office, spread out her hands towards the lamp when she had lighted it and said, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, King of the world who hast sanctified us by thy precepts, and commanded us to light the sabbath-lamp." The fourth, fifth, and sixth blasts followed each other rapidly, as soon as the sun was set; and the sabbath was now begun.

To take a family meal was the first thing done. The

master of the house filled the cup, when all were assembled around the table, and blessed it. The cup was emptied, the master of the house blessed the bread also in the usual form of words, and the meal began.

In the mean time the course of priests had been changed in the temple, that which had been on duty in the preceding week, giving place to that whose turn of service it was for the week following. The shew-bread was changed, twelve of the priests bringing each one of the new loaves in a golden dish, and two others censers with incense. Then all the children of Israel laid themselves down to rest, in the houses or in the temple, in joyful expectation of the sabbath-dawn.

The sabbath was so solemnly and strictly kept, that it was not allowed to be broken even by the greatest of the festivals; it may indeed be said, that as being the oldest, it was the root and parent of all the rest. It was not merely a day of cessation from labor; its celebration was a weekly acknowledgement, that the One God was worshipped as the creator of heaven and earth; and thus it stood in the closest connexion with the first of the ten commandments which God had given upon mount Sinai.

If, however, the sabbath could not be suspended by the festivities of the Passover, they might receive additional solemnity from the sabbath. Helon felt its sanctity with double force, in this combination. He had risen early in the morning, and could scarcely wait till the hour arrived, for his going up with the old men to the temple, for the first time in his life, to spend a sabbath there. The morning sacrifice consisted on this day of the usual offering of a lamb; then followed the special offering of the sabbath, two lambs of a year old, with the meat and drink offering that belonged to them. Last of all, the festival-offering, which consisted of two young bullocks, a ram, seven yearling lambs as a burnt-offering, and a goat as a sin-offering. In the mean time the sabbath psalm was sung by the Levites from the fifteen steps.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,
And to sing praises unto thy name, O most High!
To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning,
And thy faithfulness every night,
Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery,
Upon the harp with a solemn sound.
For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work,
I will triumph because of the works of thy hands.
O Lord! how great are thy works;
Thy thoughts are very deep!
A brutish man knoweth not this,
Nor doth a fool understand it.
When the wicked spring as the grass,
And when all the workers of iniquity flourish,
It is that they may be destroyed for ever!
But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore.
For lo! thine enemies, O Lord,
For lo! thine enemies shall perish!
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.
But thou exaltest my horn like the unicorn's;
I am anointed with fresh oil;
And mine eye shall see my desire on my enemies,
And mine ear shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.
The righteous flourisheth like the palm-tree,
He groweth like a cedar in Lebanon.
They that are planted in the house of the Lord
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still bring forth in old age,
They shall be full of sap and flourishing,
To show that Jehovah is just,
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.—Ps. xcii.

Helon remained the whole day in the temple, witnessed the evening-sacrifice, and heard the sound of the trumpet which proclaimed that the sabbath was at an end. The old men retired soon after the morning-sacrifice leaving him to his own reflections, and rejoicing that one was found among the youth of Israel, so full of enthusiasm for the service of Jehovah. Helon, as he wandered about the courts of the temple, was revolving a design, which had long been forming in his bosom, and which had been rapidly matured by the feelings of the last few days.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CLOSE OF THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER.

Although the greater part of the people had already returned to their homes, to begin the harvest, and large companies had taken their departure every morning with the music of cymbals and psalms, all the priests and Levites still remained, and a great multitude of the people. Not fewer than one hundred thousand men were still to be seen assembled in the courts of the temple.

One day Helon was present at the evening sacrifice, and was witness of a novel scene. He was standing beside the thirteen chests, which were placed in the court of the Women. Each of these chests was inscribed with the name of the gift which was to be deposited in it. Some were of the capitation tax, others, for the money which remained over and above of the destined sum when the victim had been purchased; others, for voluntary gifts for the benefit of the temple. A Jew of Cyrene came to bring the capitation tax of his countrymen. The law had enacted as follows: "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, when thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, they shall give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them, that there may be no plague among them when thou numberest them: this shall they give, every one that is numbered a half-shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: a half-shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one, from twenty years and upwards, shall give an offering to the Lord; the rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than a half-shekel, that it may be for a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls."* The shekel is a coin which contains twenty gerahs,†

*Exod. xxx. 11. † Num. iii. 47.

and has different times been of different values, but since the time of the high-priest Simon, has been equal to a Grecian stater. The coin, as struck by him, has a beautiful stamp; on the one side is seen, in the centre, the budding rod of Aaron, with the legend around it, "The holy Jerusalem:" on the other side is a pot of manna, and the words "Shekel of Israel." Whole and half-shekels were coined. It was such a half-shekel that every Jew of twenty years and upwards was bound to give, as an acknowledgment of his belonging to the people of Jehovah. It might be considered as a capitation tax levied in the last month of the ecclesiastical year. On the first day of this month, Adar, the Sanhedrim sent messengers through the whole country, who demanded the half-shekel, and fifteen days were given for the payment. On the fifteenth day of Adar, the receivers of the half-shekel took their seats beside the chests, in the court of the Women, and all who were twenty years and upwards brought their contribution. If any one neglected to do so, compulsory measures were resorted to, in order to obtain it. To the very poorest persons a further respite of a year was granted, and for this reason a chest for the past year was placed by that which received the contributions of the present. At this time a multitude of the poorer class were seen soliciting alms from the rich, to enable them to discharge their debt. This was the only kind of begging which the law allowed in Israel. Strangers, who came to Jerusalem chiefly at the festivals, were accustomed to take these opportunities of discharging the debt, especially at the Passover, which was some weeks later than the day of the month Adar, on which it became due.

The Cyrenian had brought the sum which was due from his Jewish brethren in Cyrene, and was about to deposit it in the chest. But it was necessary that it should be paid in shekels, and he had only foreign coin. As this was a case of frequent occurrence, the receivers of the shekel were also money-changers, and had their tables beside the chest. For

a certain premium they gave Jewish shekels for the Cyrenian coins. Helon witnessed the proceeding with no small dissatisfaction.

He had the true Mosaic dislike to commerce and trade, of which, in the whole law, no single instance of encouragement is found. Though Canaan lay on the shore of the Mediterranean, and the example of their nearest neighbors, the Phœnicians, encouraged the Israelites to commerce, it was not the will of Jehovah that his people should devote themselves to traffic; agriculture on the contrary, was consecrated by its union with religion, and all the great national festivals were as much agricultural as historical. In this respect Israel resembled the Greeks more than the Orientals, among whom commerce is usually held in high estimation, constitutes an order of nobility, and engages even the prime ministers of the state. The Greek, on the contrary, at least in the earliest and purest times, considered such occupations as a surrender of his dignity, and inconsistent with the magnanimity of a free man. Helon would fain have seen the same spirit continuing to animate the Israelites, though for a different reason. The constant intercourse with foreigners, necessarily produced compromises and conformity, which diminished their attachment to the law and usages of their forefathers. He disliked the Hellenists of Alexandria, as much as their love of allegories, and deduced indeed from the former their neglect of the law, their indifference to the temple of Moriah, and their endeavor to pacify their conscience by allegorizing those precepts which in their literal acceptation too obviously rebuked their practices. If the children of the captivity, he thought, had not taken up the pursuit of commerce on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris, they would have returned in much greater numbers, and so many of them would not have been induced to prefer gain in a foreign land to the recovery of their own. "And had they returned in greater numbers," he exclaimed, "how soon would the Samaritans have been expelled, Galilee purified, and the Philistines been forced to bow their necks! Jerusa-

lem would have been inhabited by a totally different race of men, and the days of Solomon might have returned!"

With such feelings, it was natural that he should turn away in disgust from all that seemed to change the proper character of the festival. This mixture of commerce with the religious solemnity was indeed not new; it seemed almost to arise necessarily out of the circumstances of the case. The festivals were not merely occasions of appearing before Jehovah, for pious services, nor merely anniversary assemblages of the people; they were also the great national fairs. One end of the court of the Gentiles served as a market-place; the most extensive dealings carried on in it were in cattle. Vast droves of sheep, goats, and bullocks preceded the pilgrims on their way to the city, to supply the sacrifices which were to be offered there. As the animals so offered must be all clean, it was necessary that this branch of trade should be wholly in the hands of the Jews. The sheep came from the wilderness of Judah; the bullocks from Galilee; Tekoah and Hermon furnished honey, and Gilead its precious balm. Phœnicians also came to the festivals, and brought with them foreign merchandise, purple, Egyptian linen, &c.

Elisama was frequently among the merchants, and judged of their wares with the eyes of one experienced in such matters, for he had himself been a merchant. But Helon could never be persuaded to follow his uncle's occupation, and had been accustomed at Alexandria to take refuge in the Bruchion, when exhorted to engage in commerce. "O! that a prophet would appear," he exclaimed one day in the temple, when his zeal was more than ordinarily kindled, "who should overturn the tables of the money-changers, and drive those who buy and sell from the courts of Jehovah!"*

These things, however, were only trivial diminutions of his pleasure, small specks in the bright glory which invested the temple and its services to his imagination. When he went up, morning or evening, and entered by the Beautiful-gate, he

* This was done by the Messiah. Vide John ii. 13—16.

hastened as speedily as possible from the objects the sight of which displeased him, to reach a scene more congenial to his feelings, to ascend the flight of steps which conducted to the altar of burnt-offering, to wander in the spacious porticoes, to follow with the eye the majestic steps of the high-priest, or listen to the psalms of the Levites. He had not words to describe the delight in which he thus passed his hours away. He inwardly resolved to become as it was then called, a Chasidean,* i. e. a perfectly righteous man. He thanked Jehovah that he had so happily escaped from the meshes of the Greek philosophy, and had so pure and ardent a love for the law of his fathers. He prayed to the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, to be enabled to fulfil the law in all its rigor, and he was conscious of a warmth of attachment to it, and an energy of purpose, which left him no doubt of succeeding.

The close of the festival was at hand; Helon could scarce refrain from tears when, on the evening of the seventh day, the sound of the trumpets announced that it was over. The last day, the twenty-first of the month Nisan, was as holy as the first, and no work could lawfully be done on either of them. The festival-offering was presented on this as on every other of the seven days; the ashes from such a multitude of sacrifices, never having been cleared away, had accumulated to a lofty heap upon the altar. All those who had remained in Jerusalem had assembled in the temple; in the afternoon they went to the synagogue, and with sunset the feast of unleavened bread was over.

Helon went down from the temple, with slow and melancholy steps. The pilgrims were preparing for their departure, and the citizens returning to their ordinary occupations. On the following morning they were present at the sacrifice, and returned thanks to Jehovah for permitting them to join in the celebration of his Passover. The tents were then struck;

* *Chasidean* — The Chasidim, or Pietists, were a sect that sprung up during the Maccabees, distinguished for their devotion to pure Judaism, and their zeal for the institutions of Israel.

the different companies arranged themselves, and with the sound of cymbals poured out from the different gates, after having taken a hearty farewell of their respective friends.

Helon stood upon the roof, and saw the commotion in the streets and at the gates. The city gradually became more empty and silent. He listened, as the songs of the pilgrims died away in the distance, and when he heard from the road to Bethlehem, where he had himself joined in the chorus, the psalm which they were singing on their return, the sound fell on his heart, like the knell of departed joy.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SACERDOTAL OFFICE.

The feast of the Passover was ended. The multitude had returned to their homes, to resume their occupations in the city. The ashes on the altar of burnt-offering had been cleared away. The days of unleavened bread were past; the people had returned to their ordinary food, and all the glory of the festival seemed to have disappeared from the city.

Helon stood on the roof, on the following morning, contemplating the rising sun. His eyes turned towards the temple, and he remembered, with a feeling of disappointment and regret, that on this as on the preceding day, only a single customary sacrifice would be presented there. He looked down upon the streets — the exhilarating commotion of the festival had vanished, and all was solitary and still, save where a Tyrian merchant was seen hastening through the gate with his empty sacks, or a Galilean dealer in cattle, driving before him the remnant of his herd, for which he had been unable to find a purchaser. No pilgrim from Hebron or Libnah, no stranger of the Diaspora was to be seen.

A deep melancholy took possession of Helon's mind, and this day seemed likely to pass even more gloomily than the preceding. The dejection of mind which for several years past had been his habitual companion, had suddenly vanished during the paschal week. The enthusiasm which began at Beersheba, when he knelt down to greet the land of his fathers, had gone on constantly increasing; and he had felt within himself a resolution, which it seemed as if nothing could daunt, to keep the law of Jehovah. But now, though still in the Holy Land and in the city of God, his spirits sunk at every moment; his feelings had been too highly excited, and this depression was the natural consequence. He could not descend to the ordinary occupations of life in Jerusalem, in which, as the city of Jehovah, it seemed to him that a perpetual festival ought to prevail.

In the preceding days only the psalms, with their tone of cheerful and exulting piety, or the joyous prophecies of Isaiah, had been in his heart and on his lips; now the plaintive strains of Jeremiah, his former favorites, recurred to his mind, and he began to feel how removed he still was from that inward peace for which he longed, and which he thought that he had found in the first days of the festival. When he looked down upon the streets, whose comparative emptiness seemed to him absolute desolation, the beginning of the Lamentations came to his mind;

> How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!
> How is she become as a widow!

And he could scarcely forbear adding from the same prophet;*

> My soul is removed from peace,
> And I said my confidence is perished
> And my hope in Jehovah.

With such feelings he wandered up and down on the roof, in the cool air of morning. Suddenly the smoke of the

* Lam. iii. 18.

morning-sacrifice arose on mount Moriah, and the sound of a solitary trumpet was heard from the hill of the Lord. All Helon's feelings returned with the associations of this sight and sound. "There is then," he exclaimed, "one occupation in Jerusalem, which is a perpetual festival. It is theirs who dwell in the house of the Lord and minister at his altar. Why do I delay my resolution?"

At this moment the door of the Alijah opened, and the venerable Elisama issued from it. He had been performing there his morning devotions. Helon went up to him, wished him peace, and with kindling looks thus addressed him; "My uncle, often hast thou told me that Israel is Israel only in the Holy Land, yet even here I cannot remain, unless I become a priest."

"Restless youth," said Elisama smiling, "is it not enough for thee that thou art in the city of Jehovah?"

"But," replied Helon, "even in the city of Jehovah, the priests alone keep a perpetual festival; and I fain would keep it with them."

Elisama looked at him in joyful surprise. It had been his own wish that Helon, whose dislike of commerce he perceived, should become a priest, but wishing that it should be his spontaneous choice, he had forborne to suggest it to him; and he had not hoped for so speedy and so decisive a declaration. Scarcely able to repress his joy, he replied, "In a son of Levi the wish is natural; but what has suggested it?"

Helon related to him what he had felt on the second day of the Passover, when offering the burnt-offering; how the desire of entering into the sacerdotal order had ripened into resolution, and how ever since that time the words of the prophet,* "the priest is an angel of the Lord," had been perpetually before his mind, till at length his painful feelings on seeing the deserted city, and the joy which had revived in him on hearing the trumpet from Moriah, had convinced him that he could be happy only by entering into the priesthood.

* Mal. ii. 7.

Elisama embraced him, and both remained for a time weeping. At length Elisama, breaking silence, said, "We will go tomorrow to the high-priest; he knows our family and me. In truth," he continued, "Jehovah has blessed our house with much wealth in a foreign land, and thou, alas, art its only heir. It is right that thou shouldst revive the priesthood in our family, in which it has slept for four hundred years. This is the curse which rests on Israel in foreign lands. The privilege to be anointed to Jehovah by birth, and to have the right of ministering before him, is despised, and a Levite becomes but like another man. This I have often thought; the pursuits of commerce have indeed prevented my acting on this conviction, but all my wealth has been an inadequate consolation to me."

"My second father!" exclaimed Helon, "my heart overflows with joy to hear that you think so; and with gratitude, that you permit me to revive the priesthood in our family."

"Yes, Helon," said Elisama, "I feel, too, that the priest is an angel of the Lord of Hosts. In the hour in which thou didst resolve to make a journey to the Holy Land, I framed in my heart the blessing which my lips now pronounce upon thee. But let us go to the grave of thy father, that thou mayest received his blessing."

Without entering the house, they descended the staircase which led directly from the roof into the outer court, and so into the street. Passing along the Broad-street they came immediately from the Higher City into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and its cedars, and proceeded beneath their solemn shade, till they reached the well-known sepulchre of the Egyptian pilgrim.

Both stood before it awhile in silence, and seemed to expect that some voice should still issue from it, or that the spirit of the beloved father and brother should come forth.

"O! hadst thou lived to see this hour," at length exclaimed Elisama, "how had thy paternal heart rejoiced!"

Helon wept, whether in joy or sorrow he himself scarcely

knew — but such tears are of a higher kind. He threw himself upon the grave, and long remained there praying and weeping. Elisama too gave free vent to his tears. "Arise," he said, at length, to Helon, "and let us repeat together the 90th psalm. Thy father will answer thee in this song of Moses, and bless thee in the words of the man of God."

Helon arose, and they both sang as proposed. When they had finished, "Does not this psalm," said Elisama, "seem to have been composed to suit our circumstances; beginning with lamentation on account of death, and confession of sin: yet even in the midst of these, calling on Jehovah, on him who has been our refuge from generation to generation? Yes, Helon, such has he been to the whole series of our ancestors even to him who, with the prophet Jeremiah, was compelled to flee into Egypt; and on this we found our prayer, Return to us O Jehovah! The Lord has heard thee, happy youth! Thou shalt behold the works of Jehovah! And from the sepulchre of thy father, from beneath these primeval cedars, his spirit blesses thee and says, The favor of the Lord thy God be upon thee. May he prosper all the work of thy hands, yea, the work of thy hands may his goodness prosper. And now let us go. We will return home by Zion and by the spring of Siloah."

At the southeast corner of Jerusalem, near the termination of the Kedron, lies the valley of Hinnom, where once sacrifices were offered to Moloch on Tophet. They bent their course around the Water-gate and went through this valley which lies on the southern side, along the aqueduct of Siloah, which had been erected by Solomon. They came first to the lower pool, then to the remains of a noble garden, and at last, opposite to the southwest side of the city, to the upper pool, near which was the highly-prized fountain of Siloah, which Manasseh on his return, had connected with the city by means of a well. Isaiah describes the waters of Siloah as "flowing softly."

Passing by the Fuller's Field,* as it was called from ancient

* 2 Kings xviii. 17. Isaiah vii. 3.

times, and bending round the western side of the city, by the ruins of the aqueduct of Hezekiah, they entered the valley of Siloah. Between the gate of the Fountain and the Valley they saw the tower of Zion, formerly called the tower of the Jebusites, and now the city of David, rising in the midst of the Higher City which had been built around it. The Higher and Lower City were separated by a valley, which was called the Tyropœon (valley of the cheese-makers.) They entered by the gate of the Valley and thus reached again the house of Iddo, in the Higher City, and in the Broad-street.

How did Iddo sympathize in the joy with which Elisama announced to him the determination of Helon! He was standing in the outer court, and had just taken leave of some acquaintance, when they entered. Leading them with exclamations of joy to the inner court, he called his wife from the apartment of the women, made the slaves place cushions around the fountain, and repeatedly exclaimed, "What a happiness for a family! The priest is indeed an angel of Jehovah of Hosts."

The day was spent in domestic festivity, but Helon could not be present at the evening sacrifice, because he had made himself unclean by contact with a grave.* It seemed somewhat strange to him, that he should have been defiled by a visit to his father's tomb and be unfit to appear in the temple of Jehovah, because he had shed there tears not of earthly sorrow but of heavenly hope. But he consoled himself with the thought that the priest was more secure even in this respect.

Helon purified himself in the evening, by the prescribed ablutions. Still he was not permitted to enter the temple for seven days to come; for so long the uncleanness lasted which was produced by touching a sepulchre. But the prohibition applied only to the temple.

The following day was a sabbath. Elisama took the presents which he had designed for the high-priest, and Helon

* Numb. xix. 16.

and he went together to the castle of Baris. It was a stately edifice erected by Hyrcanus. It stood at the northeast corner of the temple, on a steep rock fifty cubits high, and formed a quadrangle, in the midst of which stood a splendid palace. Besides a court, it was surrounded with a wall, on the four corners of which were towers, that on the southeast side being the highest, for the purpose of commanding the temple from it.

The high-priest received the strangers sitting in the inner court, by the fountain, and bade them welcome. Elisama had been known to him before, and Hyrcanus rejoiced to see him after an interval of many years. With lofty panegyrics of his government, and the heroic deeds of himself and his progenitors, Elisama laid his Egyptian presents at his feet, consisting of valuable or curious productions of nature and art from that country, and then made application for Helon's admission into the priesthood. The high-priest lent a favorable ear to the request, but observed, that as the triumphal entry of his sons was to take place on the approaching new moon, he could not before that time admit Helon to the temple service, and he recommended it to Elisama to employ the interval in examining the genealogical table of the young candidate. Having promised them all necessary aid in carrying their purpose into effect, he dismissed them.

The first step had now been taken. Helon left the castle, full of exultation, and congratulating Israel that such a hero as Hyrcanus sat upon its throne. On their return home, Elisama announced to Iddo his intention of making a journey with Helon to Joppa, where the keeper of the genealogical register of their family dwelt. "Since you are now to be an inhabitant of the Promised Land," said he to Helon, "it is right that you should become acquainted with it, and with your kinsmen who dwell in it. We shall return in time to witness the triumphal entry." Helon requested that they might take Anathoth in their way, a place which he felt an indescribable longing to see, as being the native town of his

prophet Jeremiah. Elisama agreed, and as soon as the sabbath was ended, preparations for the journey were hastily made.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE JOURNEY TO JOPPA.

The crowing of the cock had already announced the near approach of morning, yet all was still in the streets of Jerusalem and in the temple, when Elisama, Helon, and the faithful Sallu, their upper garments girt short around them, with sandals on their feet, and staves in their hands, passed through the gate of Ephraim, and took the road to Anathoth.

They entered the territory of the tribe of Benjamin as soon as they had passed the gate. Jerusalem lay on the confines of Judah and Benjamin, as the metropolis of the whole people, and not belonging to any one tribe exclusively. Since the return from the captivity, the distinction of the tribes had been obliterated, with the exception of that of Levi, and, strictly speaking, only the name remained in the case of the others, as a cherished memorial of former times.

A beautiful and fruitful plain, yet with something of declivity, lay before them, the only level ground in the immediate vicinity of the city. On whichever side you quit Jerusalem, the ground falls, for Jerusalem stands elevated and conspicuous on the surface of the earth, as it does in the history of the world. It was growing light when they came into the King's valley, so called because it was here that Melchisedec, priest of the Most High God and King of Salem had met Abram,* returning triumphant from his battle with Chedorlaomer and his confederate kings, and brought wine and bread to the

* Gen. xiv. 18.

patriarch and blessed him. Here too the king of Sodom came to meet Abram. They passed along this beautiful valley, which was beginning to be brightened by the first beams of the sun; the sickle of the reapers was heard on every side, and they congratulated themselves on being permitted to visit scenes where holy men had walked. "These," said Elisama, "are truly consecrated spots; the memory of the events which passed here lives from generation to generation, and has outlasted the pillar which Absalom raised yonder, hoping to perpetuate his name by this monument, when he had no son to preserve it.* He had no son, because he had shown that he could not teach him to honor a father; his monument has disappeared; no man mentions the pillar of Absalom; but the friendly meeting of the kings will be handed down to the latest posterity, in the name which this valley bears."

Helon was silent; for he perceived that his uncle had involuntarily awakened a thought in his own mind, which never failed to give him pain. Elisama had no children, and he regarded this as a grievous punishment from heaven, for some unknown sin which he had committed. With an agitated voice he turned to Helon and gave him his hand; "Be thou," he said, "my son! Like Absalom I have sinned. I did indeed honor my father to his dying day; but the ways of the Lord are unsearchable; he is righteous, and it becomes me to say with David, 'Who can tell how often he transgresseth! Cleanse thou me from secret faults.'"

"I am thy son," replied Helon, and pressed Elisama's hand. "But here while Israel rejoices around us, in this lovely valley, in the blessing of the harvest, let joy and thankfulness alone occupy our minds."

They proceeded on their way. The fields of barley stood, golden ripe, on either side of the road; troops of reapers were on their way to the harvest, and the sound of the sickle, the song of the laborer, and the rolling of the threshing-wain

* 2 Sam. xviii. 18.

resounded through the air. While rows of the reapers were busy in cutting down the grain, others were binding up the sheaves, tying the stalks not far from the ears. Here a corner of the field was left for the poor;* there a field already reaped was affording them a gleaning. Some were carrying their sheaves to the threshing-floor, others were loading them on wagons to convey them thither. They passed one of these threshing-floors: it was an open place in the field where the soil had been made hard and smooth by stamping; the width was on an average from thirty to forty paces, and oxen, unmuzzled, according to the law, were treading out the grain.† In another, which belonged to a rich man, a servant sat upon the threshing-wain, guiding the beasts, who dragged this machine, with its iron-shod wheels, over the sheaves, while another, following behind, shook up the straw with a fork. All were enlivening their various labors with a song; and such passages as these might frequently be heard,

> He watereth the hills from his chambers,
> The earth is satisfied with the fruit of his works.
> He causeth grass to grow for cattle,
> And herb for the service of man,
> Bringing forth bread out of the earth.—Ps. civ.

Or this,

> Thou crownest the year with thy goodness;
> Thy paths drop fatness.
> They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness,
> And the little hills rejoice on every side.
> The pastures are clothed with flocks,
> The valleys also are covered over with corn,
> They shout for joy and sing.—Ps. lxv.

The travellers joined in these festive songs, and, according to ancient custom, pronounced, at every field which they passed, the benediction,

> The blessing of Jehovah be upon you!
> We bless you in the name of Jehovah.—Ps. cxxix. 8.

* Lev. xix. 9. † Deut. xxv. 4.

Helon felt now the full force of the prophecy of Jehovah by Isaiah :* "They joy before thee, according to the joy in harvest." They had travelled about three sabbath-days' journeys through this exhilarating scene, when they reached the little town of Anathoth; their road to Joppa did not necessarily take them through it, but it was the birth-place of Jeremiah, and Elisama and Helon could not refuse themselves the pleasure of hallowing the remembrance of the prophet, who had been the guest of their family, on his own natal soil. It was here that this man of God had spent his childhood — here, as a youth, he had received the call of Jehovah; and when Helon, in his boyish days, had heard from his father or his mother, or his uncle, any anecdote of their prophet, the names of Jeremiah and of Anathoth had always been connected together.

They halted at the gate, and asked to be shown the field of Hanameel, which Jeremiah bought from the son of his father's brother,† when the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, a transaction which Jehovah designed to be an omen that the people then dispersed should be again collected together, and return to occupy their ancient possessions. "For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel, they shall still buy houses, fields, and vineyards in this land." One of the severest denunciations of the prophet, was that delivered against Anathoth, in which, as his own city, he was least held in honor.

Thus saith Jehovah against the men of Anathoth,
Who seek thy life and command thee,
"Prophecy not in the name of Jehovah
Lest thou die by our hand."
Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts,
Behold, I will punish them:
The young men shall die by the sword;
Their sons and their daughters shall die by famine,
And there shall be no remnant of them.
For I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth
In the time when I visit them.—Jer. xi.

* Isaiah ix. 3. † Jer. xxxvii. 7.

It was fearfully accomplished on this city of the priests; but so was also the word spoken at the purchase of the field of Hanameel; for at the return from the captivity one hundred and twentyeight men undertook to rebuild the city of their fathers.*

Helon's ancestors, strictly speaking, derived their extraction from this city of the priests in the tribe Benjamin, and therefore he regarded this as his own city. He imagined a resemblance between himself, as he was now about to assume the sacerdotal office, and the calling of the prophet Jeremiah, and repeated the account of it to his uncle, as they returned from seeing the field of Hanameel.†

He left this remarkable place with regret; but it had ceased for several generations to be the abode of his ancestors; Elisama had neither kindred nor even acquaintance there, and they had a long journey still before them.

They left Mizpah, Emmaus, Rama, and Kirjathjearim to the north. Helon lamented that they could not visit them all, but must bend their course directly from Anathoth to Bethshemesh. Bethshemesh is the ancient city of the priests in Judah, to which the alarmed Philistines brought back the ark of the covenant, and where blameable curiosity respecting sacred things was severely punished.‡

From Bethshemesh they followed the road to Modin, a spot which their admiration and loyalty towards the Maccabees would not allow them to pass without notice. What could be more interesting to sons of Israel, who had just come from a land which was still a house of bondage to their nation, than the place where the heroes, who had emancipated Judah, had begun their work in the might of Jehovah, and with his blessing. In this little village of Modin lived the pious father with his five valiant sons, whose family bore the name of the *Hammerer*, Maccabæus. When the frenzy of Antiochus Epiphanes had risen to the highest pitch, and Jerusalem bent beneath his oppression, the aged Mattathias, in this insignifi-

* Ezra ii. 23. † Jer. i. ‡ 2 Sam. vi. 19.

cant spot, declared, "Though all nations in the dominions of the king obey him, so that every one falleth away from the worship of his fathers, and obeyeth the commands of the king, yet I and my sons and my brothers will not depart from the law of our fathers."* So he spake and punished the first apostate whom he saw, and overturned the altars of the king, not in blind unauthorized fury, but in holy zeal for the rights of his people. He and his family quitted their abode, took refuge in the mountains, and collected around them the noblest and the bravest of the nation. The father died; but his spirit rested upon his sons; one after another fought and conquered for the law of Jehovah; until at length, the son of Simon, our Hyrcanus, obtained the meed of so many exploits in the united dignities of prince and priest.

Simon, in the brilliant days of his prosperity, caused the sepulchre of his family to be enlarged, and made it one of the most splendid works of architecture in the country. Elisama and Helon hastened to visit it, and admired the lofty work of hewn stones, the seven pyramids raised upon it in honor of the five sons and their parents, the tall columns which surrounded it, and the emblems of their victories carved in stone upon the monument.†

"May Jehovah increase them a thousand times!" said Elisama. "May Jehovah bless this heroic family of priests!" exclaimed Helon: and as they pursued their way and looked back on the lofty monument, they observed to each other that even in the destruction of Samaria, that is to the third generation, God continued to prosper them. Reclining under the shadow of a few lofty palms, which stood by the road side, where they could see the towering mausoleum, they refreshed their bodies in the shade, and cheered their minds with the thought of Jehovah's mercies.

At length they arose and set forward on their way, and reached the limit of their first day's journey, Lydda, which bears also the names of Lod and Diospolis. In a direct line

* 1 Maccab. ii. † 1 Maccab. xiii. 27.

they were forty sabbath-days' journeys from Jerusalem, but their circuitous route made it amount to a good deal more. In the neighborhood of this city, the rich cornland of Ono bordered on the fertile pastures of Sharon, which extends northward from the Mediterranean sea. Close to the gate was a large house, where men in festal attire were going in and out, and the open gate seemed to invite the presence of the stranger. "Let us turn in hither," said Elisama; "hospitality never fails among those who are celebrating a feast."

The master of the house came to the outer court to receive them, and conducting them to the house, bade them welcome to the feast of the winnowing which he was celebrating.* As the threshing-floor where this feast was usually held was very near his house, he was accustomed to transfer it thither. He led them into the inner court, where his guests were assembled; the slaves untied the latchets of their sandals, and washed their feet. Elisama was much fatigued and enjoyed repose; but he was not allowed to enjoy it long, for they were speedily called to the meal. A great abundance of dishes was placed upon the table, the servants were treated as the chief persons, milk, honey, wine, fruit, cheese, rice, and flesh, were so plentifully supplied, that they could not be consumed, though the appetite of the guests was keen.

"Our doctors of the law," said the master of the house, "reckon the making a feast among good works, and I feel this doubly at the feast of the winnowing, which I make for my servants." Helon attached himself to the priests and Levites of the place, who according to the ancient custom of Israel, had also been invited;† they received him into their circle and related to him at his request the history of Lydda. All the particulars arrested his attention, but none more than a description which an aged Levite gave of the desolation caused by a flight of locusts which he had witnessed in his youth. These locusts are of about the length and thickness of a finger; their numbers are countless, and they form swarms

* Ruth iii. 1, 2. † Deut. xii. 17, 18.

which extend for several leagues in breadth. Such a swarm, when approaching, appears like a mist; when it is arrived, it resembles the falling of thick flakes of snow: the air is darkened and filled with a fearful murmur: they cover the ground and all that grows on it, often to a foot in height, devouring every green thing, grass, corn and the trunks of young trees. They creep into the houses, destroy clothes and furniture, and besides this, lay their eggs in the ground, which in the course of fifteen or sixteen days become young locusts. The southeast wind brings them, and it is happy for the land when it also drives them into the sea.

The aged Levite had retained such a lively impression of the misery of those times, that he could not cease from describing the plague itself, and the still more dreadful evils of pestilence and famine which it left behind. Helon listened to him with shuddering, and then broke out in the words in which the prophet Joel describes them:

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion,
And sound an alarm in my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble.
For the day of the Lord cometh — it is nigh at hand.
A day of darkness and gloom —
A day of clouds and thick darkness.
As twilight spreads over the mountains,
So now a people, great and strong.
There hath not been ever the like,
Nor shall be from generation to generation.
A flame devoureth before them,
And behind them a fire burneth.
The land is the garden of Eden before them,
And behind them a desolate wilderness:
Yea, nothing shall escape them. — Joel ii.

It was late when our travellers retired to rest; yet they arose early, to reach Joppa before the heat of the day. Elisama left a present with the master of the house, as a return for his hospitality, and they took leave of each other, one saying, "God reward thee;" the other acknowledging it as a

gift of God, that such guests had taken up their abode with him.

They had not travelled more than seven sabbath-days' journeys, when Joppa, the *Beautiful*, as its name implies, rose before them. It is close to the sea, is built upon a rising ground, and offers on all sides picturesque and varied prospects. Towards the west the open sea extends; towards the east and south spreads the fertile plain of Sephela, reaching as far as Gaza, in which are the fifteen principal cities of the Philistines: towards the north, as far as Carmel, the flowery meads of Sharon are seen, and through the dark summits of the hills of Ephraim and Judah on the east, a piercing sight can even discern one of the towers of Jerusalem. A thin veil of morning vapor lay on the blue hills, on the distant plains and the boundless sea. Our travellers gazed on the scene with such a fulness of tranquil delight, that it was long ere they remembered that they had business in the city. Elisama inquired at the gate for his friend, and going to his house was received by him with a hearty greeting. His first question was respecting the residence of the genealogist. He was told that he no longer lived in Joppa, but was gone to Ziklag. Elisama was provoked that he should have received false information in Jerusalem, but Helon pacified his uncle, by reminding him that they had enjoyed a pleasant journey, and this mistake would afford him an opportunity of seeing the southwest side of Judah. Elisama would gladly have taken his departure instantly, and Helon have followed him; but their host insisted that they should remain with him till the morrow. Elisama agreed, on condition that he should furnish Helon with a guide, to conduct him to the harbor, and show him what was remarkable in it. He called for this purpose one of his sons, who was of nearly Helon's age, and they went down to the shore. Here Solomon had landed his cedar-wood from Lebanon,* to be used in his works of architecture, and it was by the same haven that the materials

* 2 Chron. ii. 16.

for the building of the second temple were imported. Simon the Maccabee had improved the harbor and fortified the city, which Jonathan had taken from a Syrian garrison.* Helon, well acquainted with the celebrated harbors of Egypt, examined it critically, and not being in his present mood inclined to praise anything connected with commerce, he excited some displeasure in the mind of his companion, by observing how inadequately it was sheltered from the north wind. It was about noon when they arrived at home, and found the elders sitting around the fountain in the court. "Do you remember," said Elisama to Helon, "that this was the place at which the prophet Jonah embarked on a voyage, which had nearly terminated fatally for him, when he endeavored to escape from the mission to which God had appointed him."† Helon was about to answer, when he saw his host knit his brow and start up. "You remind me," said he, "of an accursed heathen, who arrived here lately with a Phœnician caravan, a lively and acute Greek, who kept himself aloof from all the rest, and amused himself by turning the Tyrians into ridicule. This son of Belial had the assurance to ask me, if the history of our prophet was not a new version of the Grecian story of Andromeda, who was exposed here to the jaws of a sea-monster, and delivered by Perseus. What his Grecian fable may be I know not, but I was so enraged at his insinuation, that——

"This can be no other than our Myron," said Elisama. "How long since was he here?" "About three weeks," replied his host. "It is the same," said Elisama. "He came with us from Egypt as far as Gaza. The Greeks are a nation of scoffers, but it shall one day fare with them, praised be Jehovah, as it has fared with Samaria in our days."

"Were that glory also reserved to our Hyrcanus," said his host, "I would do what this man has done," pointing to a Nazarite who had just entered the court.

It was a wild looking figure which presented itself to their

* 1 Maccab. xiv. 5, 6. † Jonah i. 3.

view. His upper garment was of rough hair, and his locks hung far down his shoulders, tangled and neglected, and showing that it was long since they had been shorn.

Helon had never yet seen a Nazarite, for they were seldom to be met with but in the Holy Land. But he was acquainted with all the passages in the law relative to this kind of vow,* by which a man for a time consecrated himself, abstained from wine and from all the produce of the vine, and allowed no razor to come upon his person, nor any contact of a dead body to pollute him. This Nazarite was a Jew of Maresa, who had been one of those that had lost their house and home, when, a year and a half before, the Samaritans, at the command of the king of Syria, had inflicted great injury on the Jews, who had settled again in Maresa, subsequently to its devastation by Judas Maccabæus. In his wrath he had vowed himself to Jehovah, till the time when the atrocities of the Samaritans should cease and Samaria be razed to the foundations. He was just come from the camp of Israel, and was expressing his joy and gratitude that Jehovah had so soon accomplished the object of his vow. He had seen the houses and the ramparts of Samaria levelled, amidst the songs of the soldiery, and the spot on which the city had stood furrowed with trenches of water and converted into a desert. He had much to relate of the preparations which Hyrcanus had made for the reception of his victorious sons, and he announced his intention of going up to the Holy City, at the next feast of the new moon, to have his head shorn there, and offer a sacrifice for the termination of his Nazarite's vow. This led them into a wide field of discourse, and the Nazarite remained to partake of the evening meal though he could not taste the choice wine with which the citizen of Joppa regaled his guests. They separated in peace and love, and with the hope to meet again in a few days in the presence of Jehovah, at the rejoicings for the victory. On the following morning, Elisama, quite refreshed, grasped his staff, and, with Helon and Sallu, set out for Ziklag.

* Num. vi.

Their road led them first through Gazara, which had been a city of the Philistines, burnt after they were conquered, and rebuilt by Solomon,* and very recently strongly fortified by the Maccabees;† next to Noba, celebrated for the terrible vengeance which Saul took there upon the priest Abimelech, and on all the other inhabitants, for their crime in giving to David, when he fled from before Saul, the loaves of the shew-bread and the sword of Goliath.‡ Leaving this place, they descended from the hills into the plain of Sephela. They here came again into the scenes of harvest, and reached the town of Gath, which stands at the limit of the territory of Dan, hearing on every side shouts of joy and pious thankfulness. Gath was once the fourth among the five chief cities of the Philistines, and in later times the occasion of discord between them and the Israelites, passing from the hand of one party to that of the other. The giant Goliath was a Philistine of Gath. It had been razed by king Uzziah,§ and since that time had been a very insignificant place.

When they reached Gath, they had travelled twelve sabbath-days' journeys; they now entered the tribe of Judah, and had half that distance to travel to Eleutheropolis, a small village. Their road led them through the region which lies in the middle between Maresa and Morescheth. They quickened their pace and arrived late in the evening at Ziklag, having past through Agla, which was twelve miles distant from Eleutheropolis. Ziklag had been the favorite abode of David; Achish, the king of Gath, assigned it to him for his residence;‖ its destruction by the Amalekites had roused him to take exemplary vengeance upon them, and he had afterwards rebuilt it.

When they arrived at Ziklag, they inquired for the house of the genealogist, and went directly to it. It had long been dark, and Elisama was very weary; and when the genealogist had given them a friendly reception, as his Egyptian kinsmen,

* 1 Kings ix. 15. † 1 Maccab. ix. 52. ‡ 1 Sam. xxii. 19.
§ 2 Chron. xxvi. 6. ‖ 1 Sam. xxxvii. 5; xxx.

and expressed high approbation of Helon's determination to become a priest, they laid themselves down to rest.

The institution of genealogists may be traced up to the earliest times of Israel's existence as a nation. Jehovah was their true and only ruler. Under him the people lived in families, which together formed tribes, the families themselves being subdivided into *houses*. Each tribe had its own prince, chosen probably by the *heads of families*, who were themselves chosen by the *heads of houses*. The princes and the heads of families were called elders; their number was seventyone, and besides them there were judges, and genealogists who kept the registers of the different families. Although at various times the supreme power was by turns in the hands of heroes, kings, princes and high-priests, yet the fundamental principle of the constitution was, that Jehovah was sole and absolute monarch of his people Israel, and that they obeyed him, under all intermediate magistrates, whatever their titles or offices might be.

The genealogist of each family was a very important person, and especially in the tribe of Levi, in which so many privileges were attached to purity and certainty of extraction. He who wished to serve as a priest before Jehovah, must not only descend on the father's side from Aaron, but be of irreproachable birth on that of the mother. The series of Helon's paternal ancestors had been very exactly carried on in Egypt, and Elisama had brought documents thence with him to establish it. But his mother was also the daughter of a priest, and as her family lived in Judah, it was necessary that the genealogy on this side should be examined into, and the descent shown to be regular.

The following day was occupied with these researches. The genealogist showed the pedigree of his family to Helon; his name was formally entered under that of his mother, and he thus stood on her side among the children of the course of Abia,* as on his father's he belonged to the course of Malchia.

* Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was of the course of Abia. Luke i. 5.

On the fifth day our travellers returned to Jerusalem. Helon, rejoicing in the success of his journey, compared his own lot with that of the children of Habaiah, Hakoz, and Barzillai, of whom Ezra and Nehemiah write, that after their return from the captivity they sought for their registers, and not being able to find them, forfeited their sacerdotal office.* On their return they passed through Lachish, which Helon had not seen before, of which the prophet Micah said, "Thou art the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion."† This town was taken by Joshua from a Canaanitish prince ;‡ it was fortified by Rehoboam.§ Amaziah was put to death in it ;‖ and the ambassadors of Hezekiah came hither with presents to Sennacherib.¶ Next he saw Libnah,** which, like Lachish, was situated in the plain of Sephela, and was memorable for its defection from king Joram. At last they came to Socho, near which is the grove of terebinths, where David fought with Goliah. In the earlier part of their day's journey they had also seen the cave of Adullam, doubly memorable as having afforded a hiding-place to David, and as being the place where Judas Maccabæus kept the first sabbath, which we read of as having been celebrated after the atrocities of the king of Syria.††

Happy in having stored his memory with many pleasing pictures of the Land of Promise, infinitely more happy in the thought that there was now no obstacle to his admission into the priest-hood, Helon greeted the Holy City a second time.

* Ezra ii. 61. Neh. vii. 63. † Micah i. 13. ‡ Josh. x. 32.
§ 2 Chron. xi. 9. ‖ 2 Kings xiv. 19. ¶ 2 Kings xviii. 14.
** 2 Kings viii. 22. †† 1 Sam. xxii. 1. 2 Maccab. xii. 38.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FEAST OF THE NEW MOON.

Elisama and Helon, as they drew near the gates of Jerusalem, soon perceived from the commotion among the people, from the triumphal preparations, some wholly, some only partially finished, and from the influx of strangers, that a public rejoicing was at hand. It resembled the preparation for the Passover, but there was more of mirth, and altogether a more worldly character in it. The acclamations of joy which had been heard on the first intelligence of the victory were now renewed, on the evening before the victors were to make their solemn entry into Jerusalem.

Iddo was standing at the gate of his house, a place in which, according to the custom of the Jews, the father of the family was seldom seen, not even Iddo, lively and active as he was. On this occasion, however, he had stationed himself there, in order to lose none of the animating sights which the busy and crowded streets exhibited. Beside him stood the Nazarite, who had already arrived, in his coarse garments and unshorn locks.

The feet of the guests were washed and the supper served up. The conversation turned on what the travellers had seen during their journey, and what had passed in Jerusalem during their absence. All were in eager expectation of the spectacle of tomorrow, and as Elisama was weary, they speedily separated and retired to rest. On the following day, as early as the commencement of the morning sacrifice, the multitude streamed towards the gate of Ephraim, by which the victorious army was to enter. The streets of the New City and the Lower City, as far as the castle Baris, were strewed with fragrant flowers; tapestry of various colors hung from the parapets of the roofs, and banners were displayed from the Alijahs, while on the pinnacles of the temple were hung

the curtains which in former years had closed the entrance of the sanctuary. A chorus of virgins passsed out at the gate of Ephraim, under a splendid triumphal arch, to meet the victorious army. Messengers were hastening to and fro, the crowd increased, and every one was endeavoring to find himself a commodious place. The music of the temple was heard between. Sallu had secured one of the highest places for his masters, from which the whole scene lay before their eyes. In this way several hours had passed; the messengers, mounted on horse-back, went and returned more frequently — at length, from thousands of voices was heard the exclamation, "They come!"

The chorus of virgins arose with their psalteries and tabrets, and sung in bold strains the valor of the conquerors, the fall of Samaria, and the mercy of Jehovah to his people. When they reached the advanced guard of the army, way was made for them, till they reached the car on which the youthful Maccabees were seated. Standing before it they began an ode, the burthen of which recalled the immortal song of Miriam, the sister of Moses, the first of the female singers of Israel:

> Sing unto Jehovah, for he has triumphed gloriously:
> He hath filled Samaria with trenches of water!

Then the hymn took up the praises of the princes and the warriors and the whole people, and the defeat of Samaria; and at the close of every strophe, all with united voice and instruments, raised the chorus of Miriam.

The victorious princes thanked the virgins, who advanced before them to the triumphal arch at the gate of Ephraim. Here stood the high priest with the whole of the Sanhedrim, and a great multitude of the priests and Levites. To the sound of the temple music they sang the ninth psalm.

Priests, warriors, and citizens listened in silent veneration. The aged man who wore the insignia of the high-priest's office looked at times with moistened eyes upon the car in

which his sons were seated, as if the remembrance of his own youthful heroism revived in his mind.

When the psalm was ended, he approached his sons: they descended from their chariot and hastened to throw themselves into the arms of their father, who embraced and blessed them. The music began again; the triumphal procession arranged itself and advanced through the city, which resounded on every side with songs of congratulation. The maidens with their tabrets and psalteries headed the procession; they were followed by a multitude of victims for the sacrifice, adorned with flowers, branches and fillets, designed to be offered as a thank-offering on the morrow. Then came the prisoners in fetters, and the huge elephants which had been taken from the Syrians. Each of these animals bore a wooden tower upon his shoulders, in which were thirtytwo warriors, besides the Ethiopian who guided him.*

After these came the high-priest with the Sanhedrim, the priests, and Levites, and the temple-music. The two sons of Hyrcanus, on their car, formed the centre of the procession, and after them came the military music of flutes, horns, aduffs, and trumpets. The army itself followed, adorned with branches of laurel and palm. First came the heavy armed infantry with shields and lances, in companies of hundreds and thousands. They had no upper garment, and their under garment, which was girt up short, was of various form and color, as the fancy of each individual dictated; but all had a sword hanging at their girdle; their feet and arms were protected by metal greaves and arm-pieces, the body was covered with a coat of mail, the head with a helmet, and over the back hung the large shield. The light-armed infantry followed in like manner, but with less cumbrous defensive weapons, and slings, bows, and darts for offence. The cavalry were few in number and lightly armed; the Jewish state had never maintained any large force of this description. The military engines followed, of which the Israelites had

* 1 Maccab. vi. 37.

learned the use from the Phœnicians and Syrians; catapults, bows which were bent by machinery and threw beams of wood to a great distance; balistæ, levers, with one arm which hurled masses of stone of many hundred weight into a fortress; battering rams, consisting of the trunks of trees, armed at the extremity with an iron head of a ram, swung in chains, which were set in motion by warriors who stood beneath a moveable pent-house, and thus driven with great force against the walls. The people, crowding behind, closed the whole procession. When they arrived at the castle of Baris, the youthful warriors entered their father's palace, and the army dispersed itself through the city.

Helon had beheld with pride this display of the martial power of his nation. War and its pomp and circumstance had hitherto possessed little interest for him, who, from his youth had been devoted to the peaceful pursuits of science, and had now turned all his desires to the priesthood; yet, on this occasion, an ardor was excited in him which he had never felt before. These troops were the conquerors of the Samaritans, that apostate people, who had opposed the rebuilding of Jerusalem with such bitter hostility, and been a thorn in the side of the people of Israel. At the same time memory recurred to the manifestations of God's power in behalf of his people in earlier times, to the triumphs of Uzziah and David, to the songs of the virgins in honor of him and of Saul, of the daughter of Jepthah, of Deborah, and Miriam. What youth is there whose bosom does not glow at the sight of a victorious army of his countrymen?

While the city was filled with tumultuous rejoicings, Helon drew aside a relation of Iddo, who had served in the war, and led him home, questioning him respecting all the events of the campaign. The rejoicings of the inhabitants continued till the evening. But suddenly the trumpets were heard to sound, to announce the appearance of the new moon. The high-priest and the Sanhedrim had scarcely attended the warriors home, when they had to assemble in their hall in the temple, and fix the commencement of the festival. They

were accustomed always to meet here on the evening of the new moon. Men were stationed on all the heights and watch-towers, who, as soon as they perceived the new moon, hastened to announce it to the Sanhedrim; on this the high-priest said, "The new moon, is hallowed," and the Sanhedrim replied, "It is hallowed." Fires were then kindled upon all the hills, or messengers sent to different parts, and on the following day the people celebrated the feast of the new moon.

For the first time for many years past, the fire was lighted on this occasion on the mount of Olives. For several years, it had been the practice of the Samaritans, always watching to do injury to Israel, to light the fire on the wrong evening, and thus to mislead the people in the distant towns. The custom of making the fires had therefore been discontinued, and messengers sent through the country instead. Now, however, that Samaria was destroyed, no deception was feared, and the fires could be lighted as in old times; the citizens of Jerusalem hastened to the roofs of their houses, to watch the blaze on the mount of Olives, to which others soon answered on the more distant hills.

This new moon introduced the second month of the ecclesiastical year, Sid, or Ijar. The civil year began with the new moon of October, as the natural commencement of the annual circle of agricultural operations.

When the morning came, the people crowded to the sacrifice through the gate of Nicanor into the temple. All the courts were filled, and the warriors supplied in some measure the place of the pilgrims. Elisama and Helon remembered, that if they wished not to defile the temple, and bring on themselves the punishment denounced by the law, of being cut off from the people, they had a special duty to perform.* Before their journey they had touched the grave of Helon's father in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and had thus become unclean. This did not prevent them from appearing before the

* Numb. xix. 20.

high-priest, or from entering on their journey, or from performing their morning and evening prayer; but they were not allowed to go further into the temple than the court of the Gentiles, and had they knowingly ventured even to enter the court of Israel, they would have made themselves obnoxious to this terrible punishment. Levitical uncleanness had reference exclusively to appearing before Jehovah, in the place where his honor dwelt. The rigid demand of the performance of a purifying ceremony conveyed this intimation, that what is deemed pure by men, is not so regarded by Him, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, until it has been again made holy by the rite which he has ordained. After both had bathed themselves and washed their clothes, they presented themselves as they had already done the preceding day, on the steps which lead from the court of the Gentiles into that of the women, and underwent a sprinkling. This was performed by one, who was himself clean, on those who were unclean, and with a bunch of hyssop dipped in the water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer.* Helon thought of the words of David,

> "Purify me with hyssop, that I may be clean;
> Wash me, that I may be whiter than snow."—Ps. li. 7.

On this day, as on every other day of the year, the daily service before the altar of Jehovah began by the sacrifice of a lamb, with the meat and drink offerings which belonged to it.† When this had been done, the burnt-offering and the sin-offering which Moses had appointed on the new moon, for the whole people were offered up,‡ and finally the thank-offering for individuals. The burnt-offering consisted of two young bullocks, a ram, and seven lambs of the first year, with their meat and drink-offerings. The meat-offering to each bullock was three ephahs, to the ram two ephahs,§ to each of the sheep a tenth of an ephah of flour. The drink-offering to each bullock was half a hin‖ of wine, to the ram a third,

* Numb. xix. 17. † Exod. xxix. 38. ‡ Numb. xxviii. 11—15.

§ *Ephah*—three pecks and three pints. ‖ *Hin*—one gallon and two pints.

and to the sheep a fourth of a hin. Besides this was added, to each meat-offering, the same quantity of oil as there was of wine in the drink-offering, and also a handful of incense. The sin-offering consisted in a goat. While the burnt-offering was presented, the great Hallel was sung, and the priests on the pillars blew the trumpets.

After this the high-priest presented his thank-offering for the victory, consisting of a vast multitude of bullocks, rams, and sheep, with the appropriate meat and drink offerings; his sons also testified their gratitude by considerable sacrifices, and some of the principal officers of the army took the same method of expressing their gratitude or discharging their vows. The victims which had been seen in the procession of the day before, adorned with flowers and fillets, were brought to the altar; their blood was sprinkled upon it, the entrails with the fat waived to the Lord, towards the four winds of heaven, and then burnt upon the altar. The breast, the right shoulder, the jawbones, the tongue, and the stomach came to the share of the priests, the rest was prepared as a feast for the person who offered the sacrifice. During the sacrifice the priests blew their silver trumpets, and the Levites on the fifteen steps sung the 144th psalm.

Towards the end of all these offerings, which were so numerous that it would not have been possible to have accomplished them all in so short a time, but for the practised dexterity and systematic procedure of the priests, the Nazarite made his appearance; he had already laid aside his coarse garment, and he was now to be solemnly absolved from his vow. It was necessary for him to present all the three principal kinds of offerings, a lamb for a burnt-offering, a yearling sheep for a sin-offering, and a ram for a thank-offering.* To these was added, beside the drink-offering, a basket full of unleavened cakes, of the finest meal, of which a part were kneaded with oil, a part had only had oil poured upon them. The burnt offering was wholly consumed on

* Numb. vi. 13.

the altar; the sin-offering was the portion of the priests; the thank-offering served in a great measure to furnish a festive meal prepared for the Nazarite and his friends, in a small court in the southeast corner of the court of Israel, called the court of the Nazarites.

Helon, Elisama, Iddo, the relation of Iddo, who had returned from the war, and many others were invited to partake of this meal, and accompanied him to the court of the Nazarites. The excavation in which the fire was burning was cleared, and fresh coals heaped upon it. Then the Nazarite, returning thanks in a prayer to God, took the knife, and cutting off the hair from his head, threw it on the coals to be consumed. The flesh of the thank-offering was then roasted, and when it was ready, a priest took the shoulder, together with a cake mixed with oil, and another on which oil had been poured, and placed them in the hands of the Nazarite. They went together to the front of the sanctuary; the priest placed his own hands beneath those of the Nazarite and waived what he held in them before Jehovah, towards the four winds of heaven, and then received it for his own portion.

His vow was thus completely ended, and all the prescribed solemnities had been observed. But not contented with this, he offered several special thank-offerings, which were sacrificed in the usual manner, and the flesh prepared for the feast. The table was spread in one of the galleries over the porticoes in the court. Iddo and Helon were made to take the seats of honor, one on each side of the Nazarite. He, relieved from the cumbrous and unseemly load which he had borne for a year, had anointed his head, and was clad in a splendid caftan. The servants of the temple waited on them during the whole of the meal.

The Nazarite spread his hands over the bread, and as a blessing ascribed praise to Jehovah. Then, with more than ordinary solemnity, he took the cup with both hands, lifted it high above the table with his right, and said, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, thou King of the world, who hast given us

the fruit of the vine." The company said Amen! He then, in a long draught, drank the first wine which he had tasted for a year, and as the guests followed his example, he exclaimed, "it is true that wine maketh glad the heart of man, as the Psalmist teaches us; but he who would feel the full force of the saying, must have drank it for the first time at the close of a Nazarite's vow, before the face of Jehovah, after the destruction of Samaria. This is the time to enter into the full force of what the Preacher says, 'Eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for thy work is pleasing to God. Let thy garments be always white, and thy head lack no oil.'"*

"I perceive," said Iddo, "That you and I have reason to congratulate ourselves, that we are children of Israel and not Rechabites, who after the example and command of their ancestor Jonadab, refused to drink wine, when it was set before them by the prophet Jeremiah."†

"I have found by experience," said the Nazarite, "that zeal for Jehovah makes abstinence easy, and burdensome observances light."

"That may be seen," said one of the company, "in the case of the high-priest, who leads in some respect the life of a Nazarite perpetually. He is not allowed to drink wine, or any strong drink in the temple;‡ for the spirit of the Lord, and not intoxicating liquors, must gladden his heart. He must not touch a corpse; for he must have no communion with sin, or death which is its punishment. He must not make his head bald; for that which in ordinary life might be a burden must be an ornament of his head."§

"This motive," said Iddo, "makes many things light, that would otherwise be grievous," casting his eyes towards his young relative, who had just returned from the war. "It is true," said the youth, "I declined to avail myself of the indulgence which the law would have granted me. I had been just betrothed, when the war broke out. The keeper of the

* Eccl. ix. 7. † Je. xxxv. ‡ Lev. x. . § Lev. xxi. 10—12.

genealogical register assembled our youth and read to us the law, as spoken by the Lord our God to Moses. 'When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them; for the Lord thy God is with thee, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, Who is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? Let him return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it. And who is there that has planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? Let him also go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it. And who is there that hath betrothed a wife, and that hath not taken her? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and shall say unto them, Who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint, as well as his.'* On this proclamation being made a multitude of persons withdrew, who had built houses, or planted vineyards, or been betrothed to wives. I however refused to avail myself of this privilege, nor would my bride allow me to claim it. My father had served when, twenty years before, our prince, John Hyrcanus, had conquered Sichem and destroyed the temple on Gerizim, and he had talked to me a thousand times of his campaigns and his victories. So I thought it became his son to be with the sons of Hyrcanus, when they marched for the destruction of Samaria, and I went therefore joyfully to the field."

"And are you not now in haste to return home?" asked Iddo.

"I shall remain here till the fourteenth of this month Ijar, and then with my comrades celebrate the latter Passover, not having been able to keep the feast at the proper time.† Then I will return home and relate to my bride the valiant deeds of Aristobulus and Antigonus, how we defeated Antiochus

* Deut. xx. 1—8. † Numb. ix. 6.

Cyzicenus, who came to raise the siege of Samaria; and how Jehovah strengthened my arm, so that I smote his general Callimander in battle, whom he had left to command his army, when he himself retired to Tripolis. She will laugh the Syrian to scorn, and become my faithful wife."

When he had said those words, the whole company were loud in his praise. "Never," exclaimed Iddo, "may the altar of Jehovah be without an Hyrcanus; never may the chief of Israel, when he goes to battle, be without such soldiers!"

The conversation respecting the events of the war continued during the rest of the meal. The young soldier related to them the particulars of the defeat of Antiochus and his generals, and the ravages which he had committed upon the country when he dared not even with the six thousand Egyptian auxiliaries, attack the Jewish army. At length the last cup was blessed, and they left the temple full of joy and gratitude.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ADMISSION INTO THE PRIESTHOOD.

"O thou dream of my childhood and my youth, art thou then really about to be fulfilled? O pride and sorrow of my forefathers, sacred priesthood, art thou indeed about to be revived in their descendant? Praised be Jehovah!"

Such were the exclamations of Helon, when, a few days after the feast of the new moon, the morning dawned of the day on which he was to appear before the Sanhedrim, and to undergo their scrutiny, preparatory to his admission into the priesthood. The following day was the sabbath, when he was to offer his first sacrifice. He opened the door of the

Alijah on Iddo's house, while it was yet twilight, and after the performance of the Krischma, threw himself on the ground before Jehovah, and thus prayed:

Behold thou desirest truth in the inward part,
Teach me then hidden wisdom!
Cleanse me with hyssop, that I may be pure;
Wash me, that I may be whiter than snow.
Make me to know joy and gladness,
That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
Hide thy face from my sins,
And blot out all mine iniquities.
Create in me a pure heart, O God.
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence,
Take not thy holy spirit from me,
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,
And may a cheerful spirit support me.
Then will I teach transgressors thy ways
That sinners may be converted unto thee.—Ps. li.

The sun was rising as he quitted the Alijah. He looked towards the east, where his father's sepulchre lay in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and then to the southwest towards Egypt, where the reflection of the rising sun streaked the edge of heaven with a ruddy glow, and mentally greeted his mother. Next to the image of his parents according to the flesh, that of Aaron, the great progenitor of the sacerdotal order, took possession of his mind, on this day, which was to witness his admission into their society. Elisama came to fetch him from the roof, and with a step of conscious dignity and pride conducted him to Iddo and the guests, who were assembled in the inner court. Having received their hearty congratulations, Elisama conducted his Helon to the temple-hill. Not even on the day when he made his first pilgrimage, and passed through the Beautiful-gate of Nicanor, had the old man felt as he did on this morning, in which his kinsman was to revive the priesthood in his family. His heart beat not less high than Helon's, and his aged eye was lighted up with youthful exultation and hope. He blessed Jehovah, who had

given to him and to his deceased brother firmness to withstand all the solicitations which had been addressed to them, to assume the priesthood at Leontopolis.

Helon entered, with trembling steps, into the courts of the Lord. The Sanhedrim was standing along with the course of priests for the week, in the court of the Priests, and the morning-sacrifice was performed with the customary rites. As the priests on the pillars blew their trumpets at the pouring out of the drink-offering, and the Levites sung on the fifteen steps, the sound of their voices and their instruments seemed to him like the call of Jehovah to him. "Today," thought he, "I stand for the last time, as one of the people in the court of Israel; tomorrow I shall minister before the face of Jehovah!" When the sacrifice was over, the high-priest and the Sanhedrim withdrew into their hall of judgment. No meeting of this body was ever held for merely secular business, either on the sabbath or the day of preparation, but they often assembled to transact what related to the service of God.

With deep emotion Helon entered the hall; it was one of the largest and most splendid of all which the courts of the temple contained. It lay partly in the court of the Priests, and partly in that of Israel, and was called also Gazith, because it was paved with marble. There was an entrance from both courts, one called the Holy, the other the Common. In this all the courses of the priests were exchanged, and here the great council, or Sanhedrim, held its sittings.

The Sanhedrim consisted of seventyone persons, partly priests, partly Levites, partly elders. In extraordinary cases the elders from all the tribes were convoked, who then formed the great congregation. The high-priest occupied the place of president, and was seated at the western end; he bore the title of Nashi, or chief. On his right sat the Ab-beth-din, Father of the Council, probably the most aged man among the elders, and on his left the Wise Man, probably the most experienced among the doctors of the law. The remaining sixtyeight sat in a circle, on either side, with a secretary at

the end of each row. As the three chief persons belonged respectively to the sacerdotal order, to the body of the citizens, and the profession of the law, so the remaining members were made up of these three elements. The twentyfour courses of the priests were represented here by their heads; the elders were a deputation from the chiefs of families and of houses; the doctors of the law were the most learned of the Levites. The whole assembly was seated, with crossed feet, on cushions or carpets. The Sanhedrim was the supreme judicial and administrative court in Israel; everything relating to the service of God, foreign relations, and matters of life and death, came under its cognizance. It was further their business to scrutinize every son of Aaron, who wished to enter as a priest into the service of Jehovah.

Elisama entered the hall attended by Helon. He announced the name of the young man and of his father, and produced extracts from the registers, which ascertained the legitimacy of his birth. Aaron had four sons, two of whom were punished with an early death in the wilderness, for their presumption: the other two, Eleazar and Ithamar, had such a numerous posterity, that these were divided into sixteen and eight, or twentyfour courses or families.* As only four were found among those who returned from the captivity, these were divided into the original number of twentyfour, which bore the name of the ancestor of each family.† Helon, by his father's side, belonged to the course of Malchia, which was the fifth; and by his mother's to that of Abia, which was the eighth.

Next, the passage of the law was read, in which Jehovah commands that no descendants of Aaron should ever be admitted to the priesthood, who had any natural deformity of body, although he might still claim a subsistence from the provisions of the temple. Helon was examined and found free from any of those imperfections which the law enumerates. Had he proved otherwise, he would have been clad in

* 1 Chron. xxiv. 4. † Ezra ii. 36—39.

black, and dismissed, being only allowed in future to discharge menial offices about the temple. The outward worship of Jehovah was to be a mirror and emblem of the inward dispositions demanded from the worshipper; and therefore he required, that both his sacrifices and those who offered them should be without blemish.

Helon having undergone the necessary scrutiny, and having been found not only of pure descent but free from all bodily infirmity, was committed to the care of one of the ministering Levites, and conducted by him into the vestry, which stood near the gate of Nicanor. Here the Levite put on him the white sacerdotal robes, which one of the same body had made. They consisted of drawers reaching to the leg, the under-garment fitting close to the body and descending to the ancles, woven of one piece without a joining or a seam; the girdle of four fingers' breadth, which went twice round the body, and being tied in front, both ends hung down nearly to the feet;* it was woven so as to resemble a serpent's skin, and embroidered with flowers, purple, dark blue, and crimson; lastly, the turban, which was wound firmly around the head in the form of a crown. The feet were bare.

After being robed, Helon returned into the hall of the Sanhedrim, and the law of Moses relative to the priests was read to him.† The high-priest then blessed the candidate for the priesthood, and said, "Praised be God that no blemish hath been found in the seed of Aaron, and praised be he who hath chosen Aaron and his sons to stand and minister before God in his holy temple." And all the members of the Sanhedrim said Amen! The sitting was thus ended, and Helon was led into the court of the priests. Those of the course which was then on duty were standing there, and, greeting him, received him among their body.

Elisama offered on this joyful occasion a magnificent thank-offering of several bullocks, and invited the whole course of priests, who gradually arrived to be in readiness to begin

* Exod. xxviii. 39—43. † Lev. xxi.

their functions, to feast upon the sacrifice. Among the rest he had invited the old man of the temple. He who bore this name was a venerable priest, nearly one hundred years old, of the course of Jojarib, to which the Maccabees also belonged. Engaged since his twentyfifth year, in the service of Jehovah, he had now passed eighty years in the house of his God, and in the course of them had witnessed very eventful times. He had entered the temple, in the life of the excellent high-priest Onias III., and had endured the alternate yoke of the Syrians and the Egyptians; he had seen Antiochus Epiphanes, and known the victims of his sanguinary fury; he had been one of those who had followed the valiant Mattathias to the wilderness; he had admired the heroic deeds of the members of the family of the Maccabees, Judas, Jonathan, Simon, and John Hyrcanus, and had served them in succession. In Egypt, where he had frequently dwelt, he had seen, forty years before, the foundation of the temple of Leontopolis, and he had beheld that of Gerizim levelled with the ground. As a doctor of the law, he was master of all the knowledge of divine or earthly things which Israel then possessed, and had been able to compare his experience with the word of God. He knew accurately the opinions of all the sects into which Israel was divided, and though he joined himself to none of them, yet was honored by them all, and almost reckoned by all to belong to themselves. For a considerable time, during the last years of the high-priest Simon, and in the first years of Hyrcanus, he had discharged the honorable office of the Wise Man in the Sanhedrim, and in every year of the thirtyfour that had elapsed since the new era of Israel's emancipation began, some important affair had been decided by his counsel. In consequence of his increasing years, he had laid down all his offices, resigned his house and property to his children's children, and taken up his abode in a single apartment in the temple, where he discharged the duty of a priest of the permanent course, as it was called, that is of those who dwelt in Jerusalem and supplied

the place of any one in the other courses who could not serve in his turn. His piety, his wisdom, his earnest longing for the advent of the Messiah,* and his affection for the house of the Maccabees, were become proverbial.

The old man made his appearance, but declared that he came only to bid the youth welcome to the courts of the Lord. A feast, even in the temple, he said, did not befit a man over whom one hundred winters had already passed. All rose up when he appeared, and, falling at his feet, kissed the border of his robe. Helon had heard of him in Alexandria, and Elisama had pointed out his venerable form to him, as he assisted at the sacrifice; and when he saw him appear in the banqueting room, for his sake, overpowered by such kindness and condescension, he too fell, in silent reverence, at his feet, and kissed the border of his garment. The old man raised him up, and said, "Praised be the God of Israel, who bringeth the seed of Aaron out of Egypt, to the place where is the memorial of his name." He spoke of his grandfather, whom he had known at Alexandria, and said that Jehovah would bless that house for ever, on account of the zeal which every member of it had displayed for the honor of his law. He then called Helon from the company, observing to the rest, that before he partook of their feast, he would regale him with food of another kind. Helon with profound veneration followed the old man, who led him through the court of the Gentiles to Solomon's porch, which with its lofty pillars formed the eastern boundary of this court. Here he placed himself on the ground and Helon beside him. He made the youth relate to him the history of his life, and the manner in which the desire of becoming a priest had been first awakened in him. He afterwards addressed a few of those questions to him, by which one who knows mankind penetrates into the bosom of a youth. His countenance gradually assumed an expression of pleasure and good-will, which led Helon to hope that his answers had been satisfactory.

* This description will of course remind the reader of Simeon, who took the infant Jesus in his arms and blessed him —Luke ii. 25—35.

"It cannot be said, my son," he at length began, "that the Hellenists have been wholly wrong in their allegories. They are right in the principle from which they set out, that the service of Jehovah contains a hidden and deeper wisdom. Does not David say,

> Behold thou delightest in the truth in secret things,
> Teach me therefore thy hidden wisdom.—Ps. li. 6.

and Solomon in the Proverbs, 'His secret is with the pious?' Their error lay in this, that they sought to discover in heathen and human wisdom the secret meaning of our ordinances and laws. Here," he continued, "is the place which Jehovah hath chosen; since he brought his people out of Egypt he has never fixed on any other city, among any other of the tribes, in which a house should be builded for his name to dwell in. I brought thee hither, that thou mightest see it in all its glory. Look how its courts rise one above another, from the place on which we stand to the altar of burnt offering, and then to the sanctuary of Jehovah! Look and wonder! This Moriah is the place where Abraham was commanded to offer up his son Isaac, and where also was the threshing-floor of Araunah, at which the angel of Jehovah stretched out his hand over Jerusalem, to punish the sin of David.* David purchased the threshing-floor and built an altar there and offered sacrifice upon it, and when Jehovah heard him he exclaimed, 'Here shall be the house of Jehovah, and the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel;' and his son Solomon built the house and the altar. Dost thou know, Helon, the prayer which he offered at the dedication of the temple?' Helon without the least hesitation repeated it.†

"Praise Jehovah," said the old man, when Helon had finished, "for the blessing of a father who has so well instructed thee in the holy Scriptures. It becomes a young priest to be able to give an answer from them to every question that is put to him. Thou hast repeated Solomon's dedication

* 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. † 1 Kings viii.

prayer: his temple was founded amidst acclamations, and destroyed amidst tears: this was founded amidst tears, but its glory shall surpass that of the first temple, when He comes for whom we wait. He shall walk through this temple, stand in this porch of Solomon, pass through this Beautiful Gate, approach the altar of burnt-offering, and give this house its highest consecration. Helon, the whole earth lies under a curse; it bears thorns and thistles, and the ground is accursed on account of man, who has sinned thereon. Jehovah will take away the curse, when he comes to his temple, and from this spot the change is to begin.

"Learn too from this prayer, how holy is the place in which thou art, and in which thou shalt in future serve Jehovah. Pray to him in his temple, that his eyes may be open towards thee, and that he may make the light of his countenance to shine upon thee. Go now to the feast, and if thou desirest to hear more, come to the old man in the temple. There is his apartment."

The venerable man blessed him, and then crossed the court of the Gentiles. Helon watched him, till he disappeared, and then remained for a long time wrapt in thought, till some one came to summon him to the company. The feast concluded early, for the course of Malchia had to prepare, on the evening before the sabbath, for entering upon its office. About the ninth hour all labor had ceased, the trumpets had announced the sabbath, the Levites had baked the shew-bread, the twelve priests had carried it in solemn procession to the porch, and hence two of them had taken it into the holy place, and deposited it upon the table of shew-bread: the old shew-bread had been removed, and the two censers of incense of the preceding week had been replaced by two new ones. The rest of the priests and Levites laid themselves down betimes to sleep. Helon could not sleep. The past and the future were both too interesting. A feeling of mingled joy and awe shot through his frame when he heard the bars of the temple gates closed, and found himself shut in

within the sanctuary of Jehovah; it seemed as if he were here protected from every earthly evil, as if nothing could now prevent him from fulfilling the law of the Lord, and becoming complete in his obedience. Often was he disposed to have cried aloud, "Better is a day in thy courts, than a thousand elsewhere!" At times lost in thought, at times wrapt in devotion, he passed the sleepless hours, while the priests slumbered around him. When he heard the step of the guard of Levites, in the court of the Gentiles, or when the guard of priests, as they went their rounds in the court of Israel, with lighted torches in their hands, approached the place where he lay, he envied the happy persons who were not only allowed, but whose duty it was to traverse the courts and porticoes and palaces of the sanctuary, beneath the stars of heaven. When the two companies of priests, uniting after their separate rounds, greeted each other with the words, "All is peace," the sounds came to his mind with a significance that was indescribable.

At an early hour the watch came again to waken those who slept. The priests bathed themselves, and went to the vestry to put on their robes. Next they assembled in the hall Gazith, to cast lots for the division of the offices for the day. The first lot, which decided who should cleanse the altar of burnt-offering from the ashes of the preceding day, fell upon Helon, to his great astonishment. Then followed the lots of those who were to sacrifice the lamb, to sprinkle the blood upon the altar, to trim the lamps, to bring the parts of the victims to the altar of burnt-offering, to burn incense in the holy place, &c.

One of the priests now opened the curtain of the portico, and another the gate of Nicanor, and some of the Levites threw open the outer gates of the temple, that the children of Israel might enter. The crowing of the cock announced the time when the cleansing of the altar of burnt-offering was to take place. The priests called out to Helon, "Beware of touching any vessel, before thou hast washed thy hands

and feet and sanctified thyself." He washed himself again, mounted with trembling steps the sloping ascent to the altar, which was fifteen cubits high. He cleared the burning coals from the ashes and collected these in a heap at an appointed place. This was his first service as a priest. As he performed it, he could not help inwardly praying that the flame in his heart might in like manner be purified from everything that made it burn dim.

When the wood for the offering of that day had been prepared, and the watches and the singers chosen, after a short interval some of the priests exclaimed, "Light, light!" the others replied, "Is it light towards Hebron?" and when the question was answered in the affirmative, and the first beam of dawn struck upon the roof of the sanctuary, the chief of the course of priests exclaimed, "Priests, to your duties! Levites, to your steps! Children of Israel, to your station!"

All hastened to their respective posts. The service of Jehovah began with cleansing the altar of incense in the holy place, and laying the wood on the altar of burnt-offering. A male lamb of a year old, without blemish, was brought to the north side of the altar of burnt-offering, the men of the station laid their hands upon it, in the name of the people; one priest killed it, another received the blood, a third sprinkled the altar with it, while others first extinguished five of the lights in the seven-branched lamp in the holy place. Incense was then brought in and burnt upon the altar of incense, and the remaining lights extinguished.

The sun had now risen: the pieces of the animal which had been killed, were sprinkled with salt, the Krischma was prayed, and the flesh laid upon the altar and offered as a burnt-offering to the Lord. The meat-offering which belonged to it was next burnt, and the high-priest's meat-offering followed. Helon had already heaved the offering, by which he renewed the priesthood in his family, and now brought it to the altar. It consisted of incense and the half

of a tenth-deal of an ephah of wheat-flour, baked in oil.* He salted both and then threw all the incense, but only a handful of the meal, into the fire; for all the rest belonged to the priests.† Lastly, the drink-offering of wine was poured into a pipe, which ran from the altar to the brook Kedron, and the daily burnt-offering was closed. While the drink-offering was pouring out, the Levites played and sang upon the fifteen steps the 92d psalm, it being the sabbath day, and the two priests upon the pillar near the altar, accompanied with their trumpets.

After this daily-offering, the special-offering for the sabbath-day, consisting of two lambs of the first year, was offered,‡ accompanied with other psalms. At the close, the chief priest of the course gave his blessing,§ and the people replied by similar benedictions.

Helon had been present at many sacrifices, but this was the first time that as a priest he had stood beside the altar of burnt-offering. Seen so much more nearly than before, everything appeared in a new light to him; he felt that something more profound must be hidden under this veil of outward ceremonies, and he longed to be able to interrogate on this subject the old man of the temple, who when the sacrifice was over, had betaken himself to his cell. Helon had several times watched his countenance during the sacrifice, that he might read in it if possible the interpretation of the rite. The priests dispersed after the sacrifice was over. Helon also left the court of the Priests, and as he was entering the court of Israel, he met Elisama, who with feelings of the most animated pleasure had stood there the whole morning, to watch the first ministrations of his Helon. He pressed his hand, and would have embraced him but for the sanctity of the place. Helon regarded him with a look which expressed the fulness of his happiness, and tears stood in the eyes of both. "I have to greet thee in the name of Iddo," said Elisama. "And I thee in the name of the old man of the tem-

* Numb. xv. † Lev. vi. 14. ‡ Numb. xxviii. 9, 10. § Numb. vii. 23.

ple," said Helon. "Art thou going to him?" replied Elisama. "Go, and the God of thy fathers go with thee!"

The old man was sitting before a roll of one of the prophets, and invited Helon to seat himself beside him. After a time he asked him what had seemed most impressive to him in the psalm which he had heard sung that day on the fifteen steps?

"The close," replied Helon, "in which it is said, of those who are planted in the house of the Lord, that they continue green even in old age."

"And who are they?" asked the old man. "The sons of Levi," Helon replied.

"The priest and the Levite," said the old man, "free from the ordinary cares of life, are devoted exclusively to Jehovah. They are to present the offering of Jehovah, the bread of their God. Hence the purity which they are so carefully to preserve, not allowing themselves to come in contact with anything which might defile them. The sacerdotal order is the most exalted in the world. Yet its dignity lies not in any pre-eminence of its own; but in God's choice of it, to preserve and make known his law. Be not thou therefore unduly exalted, but rejoice that thou art permitted, as a priest of Jehovah, to minister in his temple. Before the full light of day is spread over heaven and earth, some one spot is brightened by a partial gleam. But has that spot done anything to merit this distinction? Give thanks then to Jehovah that thou standest in the earliest beams of that dawn which is the harbinger of light to all mankind. When he comes for whom we wait, the brightness of his rising shall illuminate the whole earth, and the heathen shall walk in his light."

The old man ceased, and departing, left Helon alone, who remained till near the ninth hour, when the evening-sacrifice began; and he hastened forth, that he might not be too late for his duties. The evening-sacrifice on the sabbath was in no respect different from that on ordinary days. The priests had prepared the incense, the Levites the meat-offering; He-

lon arranged his own, which consisted of the other half of the tenth-deal of the ephah of which he had offered one-half in the morning. The ceremonies and sacrifices already described were repeated; the lamb was killed and its portions burnt, the daily meat-offering, the meat offering of the high-priest, and lastly, that of Helon, were presented; incense was burnt again in the holy-place, and the seven-branched lamp lighted for the night. The drink-offering was poured out upon the altar, accompanied by the songs of the Levites, and the trumpets of the priests, and followed by the benediction, which closed the service of the day. It was about the twelfth hour. But the flame continued long after it was dark to shoot up from the altar of burnt-offering, and even through the whole night the embers continued glimmering. The consecrated vessels were restored to their places; the whole course of Malchia had been in attendance this day, as it was the sabbath, but only a sixth part of them prepared themselves for service on the morrow. When all was finished in the temple, the priests prepared their meal and then laid themselves down to rest.

So closed the first day of Helon's sacerdotal life; his heart was agitated, as it had been at his first entrance into the land of his fathers; but the sanctity of the place forbade every violent expression of his emotions. He had become more serious, it might almost be said more manly; and his joy and gratitude, instead of dissipating themselves in words, seemed to reserve their energy for action and the fulfilment of duty. A new life seemed to have begun in the temple of Jehovah.

As on the following day he attended the usual morning-sacrifice, although only as a spectator, he observed a woman who was undergoing the ceremony of purification after child-birth. She had bathed herself at home, first on the seventh and afterwards on the fortieth day, and she now brought to the temple a burnt-offering and a sin-offering — a lamb of the first year for the former, a turtle-dove for the latter.* The

* Lev. xii.

priest sprinkled her with the blood of the sin-offering, and she was purified, and praised the Lord, who had done great things for her, had preserved her own life, and had given a son into her arms. Helon beheld the ceremony with profound attention. The old man approached him, and after the rites of the morning-sacrifice were ended, turning to Helon, said to him, "Son of Adam, remember that for thee, too, a mother once offered a sin-offering and a burnt-offering."

"I know it," replied Helon, "but I have been in vain endeavoring to discover what is the import of this purification of the mother." "Compare it," said the old man, "with what thou thyself didst, to obtain purification at the festival of the new moon, after having touched a grave. Since man defiles, at his death, those who lament his departure with the tears of affection, and by his birth those who embrace him with joy, can he himself be pure by nature?"

Helon started. After a pause the old man continued: "Does not David say, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me! And did not God say to the first man, In the day that thou eatest of the tree, thou shalt die the death? Is anything more necessary, in order to prove that the birth of man is in sin, and that his death is the wages of sin? Forty days after the birth of a male, eighty, after that of a female, (the sex which first sinned,) is the mother unclean. For a burnt-offering she brings a lamb, for a sin-offering a turtle-dove, and reconciled by the blood of these innocent animals, she is permitted to appear before Jehovah. See what are the consequences of our birth!

"A red heifer, without blemish,* that has never borne the yoke, is brought before a priest, led by another priest out of the Holy City, and killed yonder on the mount of Olives. The priest dips his finger in the blood and sprinkles it seven times towards the temple; then he burns the heifer with the hide and hair, and throws upon it cedar-wood, hyssop, and a red thread. Another priest collects the ashes, and carries

* Num. xix.

them to an appointed place. All the three are rendered unclean. When any one who has defiled himself with a dead body is to be made clean again, these ashes are mixed with water, and one who is himself clean sprinkles it upon him upon the third and the seventh day; and while thus he that was unclean becomes clean, he that was clean becomes unclean. See what are the consequences of our death!"

The old man continued his walk in the court of the Priests, and left Helon standing in the greatest astonishment at the new and profound views which had been opened to him. He saw him not again till after the evening-sacrifice on the second day after the sabbath, when the family of the course of Malchia, to which Helon belonged, had been called to take its turn in ministering at the altar. He found the old man engaged in prayer, and was invited by him to place himself beside him on the carpet. After a short silence he began: "I trust that from our previous conversations you have clearly perceived, that the earth with all its inhabitants is unholy, and every individual a sinner! Is Jeremiah still the favorite prophet of your house?" Helon replied that he was. "Do you understand a passage in his prophecies, in which the same thought is twice repeated, 'Behold the days are coming, saith Jehovah, that I will raise up unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and act wisely, and shall execute justice and judgment in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell in security; and this is the name by which he shall be called, Jehovah who is our Righteousness.'* What means this?" "Instruct me," replied Helon. "This is the Messiah: on the earth which lies under the curse, man, himself sinful, cannot exhibit that righteousness which is acceptable to God. Therefore Jehovah himself will be our righteousness in the Messiah. He is the great object of prophecy, from its commencement in the days of our first parents to the present day, a period of near four thousand years, till the appearance of him for whom

* Jer. xxiii. 9 : xxxiii. 16.

we wait, the Consolation of Israel. But on account of the dulness of the people's heart, this intimation is given in a twofold way, audibly by the words of holy writ, and visibly in the sacrifices. The sacrifices are visible prophecies of the Lord who is our righteousness. How often does Jehovah declare, that he has no pleasure in sacrifices and burnt-offerings, i. e. when they are not presented with a reference to the Messiah. Taken in this connexion, they have a reconciling virtue. Every sacrifice, therefore, has a double import. The sacrificer lays his hand upon the victim's head, and thus transfers his own sin to it, and so far sacrifice is a memorial of the offerer's guilt: but on the other hand, when Jehovah accepts the sacrifice and permits the blood to be sprinkled and the flesh to be burnt upon his altar, he confirms the promise which Moses made at the establishment of the covenant in the wilderness. 'Behold, this is the blood of the covenant which Jehovah maketh with you concerning all these laws.'* The Messiah will be the true offering. As Isaiah prophecies that God will 'Lay our sins upon him and inflict chastisement upon him that we may have peace,'† so by this means he will become our righteousness, and the promise of God is confirmed and fulfilled in him. But these are dark, sacred, unfathomable thoughts; who can comprehend them in all their extent? Thus much is certain, that in his sacrifice all others will be united, and what are now called by different names, will form only one. Till he comes, there are various sacrifices according to our various necessities; some for the people collectively, as on the day of atonement and at the Passover; others for individuals; morning and evening sacrifices for each day; sabbath-offerings for the week; offerings at the new moon for the month, and at the annual festivals for the whole year. There are trespass-offerings for sins; thank-offerings of gratitude for blessings received. But enough of these things, on which it is so easy but so dangerous to enlarge. Yet hope not to understand them, till light from heaven has beamed upon thee here.

* Exod. xxiv. 8. † Isaiah liii. 5.

Keep these principles in view, pray for divine illumination, and the dark shall become light to thee. Thou knowest, even from those heathen who where the objects of thy former admiration, that there are things the knowledge of which cannot be learned, but must be given."

While they were speaking, Elisama came to the door and announced that Selumiel of Jericho was standing without, and that he wished to speak with the old man. He himself called Helon aside, while Selumiel conversed with the old man, and told him that in the ensuing week he was going to Jericho, and wished him to accompany him, as his week of service would expire on the morrow. Helon was unwilling to leave Jerusalem, but he bethought himself that it became a priest to honor his father and his mother, or those who stood in this relation to him, that his days might be long upon the earth. He therefore assented to the proposal of his uncle, especially as he heard that their journey would take them near the Oasis of the Essenes, whom he had a great desire to see. Elisama left him well pleased, and Helon hastened back into the court of the Priests.

On the fifth day the old man called Helon after the morning-sacrifice, and commanded him to follow him to his apartment. Both of them seated themselves on the carpet, and the old man began with unusual energy.

"Thy week of service is drawing to a close, and Selumiel tells me that he proposes to take thee to the pleasant city of Jericho. The angel of the Lord encamp on the journey about those that fear him! But as I foresee that he will introduce thee to the knowledge of the Essenes, I must, ere thou depart, give thee one admonition; and O, young man! remember that it is written, 'Days should speak and length of years should give understanding.'

"Eighty years have now passed over me, since I began to be acquainted with men of every variety of religious opinion among my people. I was then, as thou art now, young, without an adviser, and easily attracted and deceived by every

new wisdom which appeared. I wish to guard thee against errors into which I fell; for it is a bitter feeling at last to discover that we have been wandering from the truth. Thou rejoicest in Israel and the temple, and holdest the Hellenists alone in abhorrence. But believe me that there are things yet more to be abhorred in Israel itself, nay, even in those that are within the walls of the temple. There is a fearful division and confusion in Israel; seven sects wage war against each other. May it fare with thee as with the old man! Thou wilt find many things in all of them which will not displease thee, but pray to God that thou mayest be enabled to see, that each of them has more or less departed from the right way, and mingled human wisdom with the divine law. Thou wilt find in all, honorable and upright men, but also among all, the proud man and the hypocrite; and all, without exception, are deficient in the humility and the simplicity which are essential to the knowledge of divine truth. I do not reckon among them the *proselytes of the gate*, whom we have in all nations; and I mention them only that I may omit none, and may begin where I have least to blame. Praise Jehovah that their number is constantly increasing, and pray that he would guide them yet further — that they may renounce everything that is heathenish, and become proselytes of righteousness. It is still worse with the *Hellenists*, who have been punished, by the blindness with which they have plunged into allegory, for that worldly-mindedness which made them disdain to return to the land of Promise. This the *Essenes* did in some measure, and for this, and for their rigid obedience to the law, I praise them — but why do they imitate foreign manners in the land of Jehovah, pride themselves on vain wisdom, drawn from their ancient books, and despise the temple of our God? The *Pharisees* are their opponents, and while I justly praise their zeal for the faith of our fathers, I must blame them for mixing oral traditions so lightly with the written law, and for the pride which has prompted them to do it. For this fault they are justly re-

proved by the *Sadducees;* but much greater is their departure from the truth, who reject the prophets of Jehovah, and resemble more the disciples of a heathen Epicurus, than of the Lord who spake on Sinai. I say nothing of the *Samaritans*, who like ourselves expect a Messiah, but prefer the desolate Gerizim to our Moriah. What confusion in Israel! What dissention and mutual hatred! There is still a small handful, whom I will not call a sect, men of pious, peaceful minds, who wait in simplicity and humility for the appearance of the Messiah, who reject every other word but that of God, and keep his ordinances in his temple. Of their number I reckon myself one — Elisama also belongs to them, as do nearly all the Aramæan Jews who live in the Diaspora. In Jerusalem, however, there are few such to be found. Now thou art forewarned, go, and Jehovah bless and keep thee!"

This was the last interview which Helon at this time had with the old man. On the sixth day, the last before the new sabbath, the course of Malchia finished its term of service after the evening-sacrifice. Helon quitted the temple, and hastened to join his friends in the house of Iddo.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ESSENES.

The impression which the first week of his sacerdotal duties had made upon Helon was quite different from all that he had experienced before. Hitherto his mind had been excited, and his curiosity and expectation raised; what he had lately seen and felt had given a quiet sober calmness to his mind, which was only broken at times by the eager desire of further knowledge on those subjects, on which his conversations with the old man in the temple had turned. The

following sabbath he attended the morning and evening sacrifice, in a portico, which lay on the northern side of the court of the Priests, and opposite to the altar of burnt-offering, and was called the Covert of the sabbath. This was a distinction allotted to the course of priests who had been on duty the preceding week, and were now resting from the noblest of all occupations, the service of Jehovah.

The sun was rising on the Holy City on the first day of the week, when Iddo took leave of his guests at the Watergate. They took the road to Jericho, which leads over the mount of Olives. They had before them a journey of one hundred and fifty stadia, or about twentyfour sabbath day's journeys. Passing the dry bed of the brook Kedron, they walked under the shade of the cedars, till the road wound up the side of the mount and led them through rows of olive-trees over the easternmost of the three summits. It is loftier than any of the hills on which the city stands. As they ascended it, Helon cast back a look of gratitude and regret on the sacred spot, where God had shown him so much good. The summit commanded on one side a view of the temple, the castle Baris, Zion, and the wide-stretched city; on the other, the eye could reach to the Dead Sea and the glittering line of the Jordan's course, which winds on the other side of the walls of Jericho and falls into the Dead Sea. Towards the east, the exhalations rose from the sea, at the place where once Sodom and Gomorrah stood — a terrible memorial of Jehovah's vengeance on the transgressors. Towards the west the smoke of the morning-sacrifice was ascending from the altar of burnt-offering in the temple. "See," said Elisama, as he pointed to Moriah, "the fulfilment of the words of Moses, the glory of the Lord appearing to all the people in the fire that comes from before him and consumes the burnt-offering on the altar."* And then turning to the clouds of pitchy smoke that hung over the Dead Sea; "Behold there the fulfilment of another word of Scripture, 'The Lord thy God is a consuming fire, and a jealous God.'"†

* Lev. ix. 23, 24. † Deut. iv. 24.

They proceeded in silence. At length Helon observed, "When the flame ascends upon our altar of burnt-offering, or the seven-branched candlestick is lighted at evening in the holy place, I cannot but think of Jehovah's comparison of himself to a light, in our psalms and prophets. Fire is the most ethereal of the elements, and is a symbol as well of the grace of God to the pious, as of his indignation against sinners."

"Beware," interrupted Selumiel, "of making to thyself any likeness of God."

"I understand," said Helon, "what you mean. Even the doctrine of Zerdusht is superstition, because he has disfigured, by human additions, the knowledge which is handed down in its purity in our sacred writings. Yet it is remarkable that the children of the east have selected precisely this point from the divine wisdom of their forefathers, worshipping, also, the visible sun, instead of the eternal light."

"Be satisfied," said Selumiel, "those whom thou art about to see today, have already prayed some hours ago for the return of the heavenly light. They do so every morning, and every morning their prayer is heard. You shall see my Essenes."

"*Thy* Essenes!" said Elisama. "Thou hast already thrown out hints of this kind more than once, Selumiel, greatly to my surprise. I remember when we were young together in Egypt, thou hadst a similar passion for the doctrines of the Therapeutæ; and an early passion, it seems, never dies."

"I confess," said Selumiel, "that in my youth I often looked with veneration towards the hill beside the lake Mareotis, where they had their favorite abode. But at a later period of my life I perceived that the contemplative life of the Therapeutæ, their profound solitude, and their enthusiastic passion for allegory, are not to be compared with the pious but active life led by the Essenes. I could say much to you of this people, but I will reserve it till we have passed through Bethany."

This was indeed a spot more adapted for seeing than for listening. Bethany was a village on the eastern slope of the mount of Olives, and about two sabbath-day's journeys from Jerusalem. It was a still and lovely spot, surrounded with olives, palm-trees, figs, and dates, so that it seemed to stand in the midst of a large garden. They often turned to look back upon it, when they had passed through it. As they crossed a sparkling brook which ran at the foot of a steep hill, Selumiel exclaimed, "I will first quench my thirst, according to the manner of the Essenes, from this pure stream, and will then tell you, as I proposed just now, what I think of this people."

A wild and dreary region lay before them, called the desert of Jericho. "I know," said Selumiel, "that our Sadducees ridicule the Essenes, and our Pharisees curse them. But however the former may ridicule the idea of self-communion and moral strictness, it is certain that there is a deeper foundation for self-communion at least, than individual inclination or caprice. The aged are generally inclined to it, and I know not what more genuine happiness one who has seen the world can propose to himself, in declining years, than the undisturbed society of persons like minded with himself, engaged in the united worship of Jehovah.

"But," said Elisama, "they never appear in the temple." "That," replied Selumiel, "is what the Pharisees condemn in them, and I will not undertake to decide upon the question: but thus much is certain, that they fulfil all the other precepts of the law so much the more zealously, and appeal, on this point, to passages of holy writ, which teach the inefficacy of any ritual of sacrifice. But I will not defend them for not coming to mount Moriah; and I am so far from agreeing with them in this respect, that I am, as you know, a punctual visiter at all the festivals. Let us rather consider what both Sadducees and Pharisees blame in them, and see whether this blame does not really redound to their praise. You know that the Sadducees in their folly maintain, that the whole

course of the events of life depends upon man's own free will, that fate has no influence over human affairs, and that it rests with ourselves to be the authors of our own weal or wo. The Pharisees, with more reason, teach that some things in our lives are the work of fate, but not all, and that in some cases it depends upon ourselves whether events shall happen or not. But how many rulers of the world must they then suppose to exist, or how would they contrive to keep this host of rulers in order and in harmony? How much more just and consistent is the doctrine of the Essenes, that fate disposes of all events, that nothing happens to man without its appointment, and that the great and the trifling in events, what is necessary and what is apparently arbitrary, all is alike subject to a predestined order!"

"Nay," Elisama exclaimed, "these are subjects on which only the Messiah when he comes can instruct us fully — but this doctrine is horrible."

"Myron would say," observed Helon, "that the Essenes were Jewish Pythagoreans; as the Pharisees might be called Jewish Stoics; and the Sadducees, Jewish Epicureans."

Their conversation broke off here, all parties being a little out of humor, an effect to which the desert on which they had now entered perhaps contributed. It was a long, hilly dreary waste. Deep ravines without verdure opened beside serrated cliffs, sometimes of chalky whiteness, sometimes of sand. No fountain, no shrub, was to be discerned, as far as the eye could reach; scarce here and there a stinted plant or a dry blade of grass. The rocks were rent and thrown in such wild confusion, that Helon thought an earthquake must have torn up the bowels of the earth, in this abode of desolation and of death. Towards the east, between the ragged summits of the hills, the thick clouds of smoke from the Dead Sea arose as from the bottom of the abyss. From the higher ground the region around Jericho might indeed be seen, but it served by the contrast rather to aggravate the dreariness of the nearer scene.

Selumiel was the first to resume the discourse. "You remarked," said he to Helon, "that the Essenes are Jewish Pythagoreans; and there are in truth many points of resemblance between them. Both practise community of goods, both hold in abhorrence every kind of effeminacy and voluptuousness, both love white garments, forbid to take an oath, drink only water, pay extraordinary reverence to old age, enjoin silence for a stated time upon their novices, offer only unbloody sacrifices, and teach that destiny is supreme and uncontrollable in human affairs. They agree besides in this, that both believe the soul alone to be immortal; while the Sadducees deny that anything of man is imperishable, and the Pharisees maintain the resurrection of the body. This coincidence in so many remarkable points may give us a clue to the common source of their doctrines and institutions. Pythagoras is said to have been in Babylon at the time of our captivity, and Zerdusht to have known Israel on the banks of Chebar — may not these both have drawn from the same source as our Essenes? For my own part, I consider the Essenes to be those who have preserved the original knowledge of divine things in the greatest purity. Hence it is that they so zealously observe the law, that they keep the sabbath with peculiar sanctity, that they consider agriculture as the most honorable of all occupations, that they hold Moses in the highest veneration, and endeavor to observe the precepts of the law with unusual strictness, directing their attention to its inward fulfilment in the heart, rather than the outward act of conformity to its commands. Of their mode of life you shall judge for yourself, when we visit their village; their heroic deeds in war are known from the recent history of our country."

Helon's attention and interest were very powerfully excited, but the last warning of the old man of the temple resounded in his ears, and to interrupt the panegyrics of Selumiel, he asked him, "Can you tell me when they made their first appearance, and what is their origin?"

"Some," said Selumiel, "suppose them to descend from Jonadab, the son Rechab, who lived before the captivity; others, from those who fled into the desert with Judas Maccabæus, during the oppression of the Syrian kings; while others deduce them from Egypt, and from some of its sects of heathen philosophers. I hold them, however, to be of very high antiquity."

While he was thus speaking, they saw a wanderer hastening over one of the naked hills which were near them. He was an aged man, of a spare form and long white beard, who, supporting his steps with a staff, kept on his way without looking around him, the human counterpart of this ungenial region. "This," said Selumiel, "is one of them: I know him by his clothing, and by his only spitting behind him." As he approached they greeted him, and he gravely returned the salutation. According to the custom of Essenes, he was clad only in white garments, and carried nothing but a staff on his journey.

"Wilt thou guide us to the Oasis of the Essenes?" asked Helon.

"Follow me," he replied abruptly.

"How many are there of you?" asked Helon, endeavoring to engage him in conversation.

"There are four thousand of us in this country."

"But I am surprised that you travel without any wallet."

"I am come, curious youth, from a distance, to assist at the trial of one of our body, which cannot be held by fewer than one hundred persons. Amongst us everything is in common. We avoid great cities, but where we go we trust to the hospitality of our brethren."

"Who is the transgressor on whom you are to sit in judgment?" asked Selumiel.

"A man who had scarcely completed his probation, and was not able to keep the secret of our institution."

"Tell me," said Helon, "I beseech you, what is the probation which must be gone through, before any one can be received as a member of your society."

"He receives a white garment, a girdle of peculiar sanctity, and a spade, after which he must labor for a year, and practise self-examination. He is then received into our society, but for three years is not admitted to the common table. If in this time he gives evident tokens of being discreet, just, temperate, and chaste, an oath of tremendous sanctity is demanded from him, that he will before all things honor and serve the Lord, that he will be just towards men, that he will hate all unrighteousness, assist the pious, keep his faith and word towards every man, and pay profound obedience to the magistrate, who rules not but by the ordination of God; that he will not himself abuse power if he should be in possession of it, that he will keep his hands pure from theft and his mind from the desire of unlawful gain; that he will conceal nothing from his brethren, nor reveal their secrets to any other, even when threatened with tortures and death; that he will not communicate the doctrines of the body to any one, in any other form than that in which they have been taught to him, and that he will keep with equal care the books of doctrine and the names of the angels. When he has sworn to all this, he is admitted to a participation in the bath, in the common meal, and all the secrets of the society."

The gravity of the man, the solemnity of his words, and the earnestness with which he spoke, thrilled through Helon's frame, combined as they were with the peculiar character of the scene.

They proceeded without further speaking, till they came within sight of an Oasis, a fruitful spot amidst the waste. A fountain rose here from a cleft in the rock, and a few cottages, surrounded by cultivated fields, stood under the shade of palm-trees. Beyond the immediate neighborhood of the fountain all was wild, desolate, and barren, an emblem, according to the Essenes, of the soul of an unrighteous man, and the naphtha-smoke which rose in the distance from the Dead Sea, they regarded as a type of the future punishment of the wicked. This was the settlement of the Essenes. As

they approached, they perceived by the multitude of persons who were going to and fro, that the trial had occasioned an unusual resort. Yet, in spite of this, every thing went on with such a stillness, as if single individuals were pursuing some noiseless occupation. An Essene, an acquaintance of Selumiel, told them how great was the consternation and horror of the whole body, at the discovery that a traitor had divulged their secrets. This offence was to be visited by the most fearful penalty of their code, expulsion from their society. Its terror consisted in this, that having bound himself by an oath, which even the unworthy dared not violate, never to use ordinary food, nor even to receive food at all from other men, there was nothing left him, but to support himself on roots and herbs till he died.

They arrived about the fifth hour (eleven o'clock) the time when they took their meal in common. They had risen before daylight, had conversed together briefly, but only concerning divine, never concerning human things, and had then greeted the sun as if imploring him to rise. After this every one had been dismissed by the person under whose superintendence he was placed, to pursue his labor for the day, and having now pursued it for several hours, they had bathed themselves in cold water a second time, and girded themselves with the sacred linen dress. Assembling in a hall, the entrance to which was forbidden to all but the members of their own order, they had thence proceeded, as carefully purified as if they were in a temple, to their refectory, where they seated themselves at table, not reclined as was the custom of the East. Bread and vegetables were placed before them; a priest prayed before and after the meal; while eating, a solemn silence was preserved, and when they had finished, they laid aside the holy garment, and each prepared himself to pursue his labor without intermission till the evening.

Food was placed before the strangers, Essene fare, bread and hyssop. No women were to be seen; for the Essenes on this Oasis belonged to the highest class, in which marriage

was forbidden; it was allowed in the inferior classes, only with strict limitations and restraints. They must speedily have become extinct, had it not been that they received many children among them for education, and that many grown-up persons constantly joined their society, weary of the cares and vicissitudes of busy life. Thus they formed a society which never died out, although no child was born among them. They allowed no traffic in their community, because it must have been carried on through the medium of gold, which they considered as the root of all moral corruption; they had no servants, for each ministered to the other; and they took no oath, that which they had taken at their admission rendering every other superfluous.

Although our travellers were not admitted into the refectory of the Essenes, they were not alone. They found a multitude of sick persons assembled, who had come in hope of relief from the secret wisdom of the Essenes. They performed their cures by means of mysterious formularies, and recipes carefully preserved in their ancient books. These books had come to them in times of venerable antiquity from remote regions of the East, and were carefully studied by them, especially on the sabbath, which they held even more sacred than the other Jews. Their cures were wrought chiefly by enforcing temperance, self-command, and the dominion of the soul over the body; and with these means they performed wonders. The simplicity of their lives preserved their health to extreme old age, and not a few boasted that the spirit of prophecy had been wakened in them.

When Selumiel and Elisama had laid themselves down after the frugal repast, to rest beneath the palms, Helon went about to examine the whole arrangement and economy of this establishment. He would gladly have entered into conversation with some of the Essenes, but no one addressed him, and the determined taciturnity of their looks, and the profound stillness which reigned around these cottages, deterred him from making the attempt. He silently followed

an aged man, who with his staff was making his round through the fields, when about noon every one was already again at his labor, and who seemed to be superintending their operations. The fields were covered with luxuriant crops, but the cultivators themselves were spare and pale.

Selumiel and Elisama had rested themselves, the heat of the mid-day was past, and there was no more to be discovered in a day than in an hour respecting the Essenes. The simple exterior of their habits and customs was easily seen. To learn any part of their secrets, it was necessary to listen in silence for years together. Our travellers therefore broke up immediately after the mid-day, and continued their tedious way through the desert to Jericho. Selumiel had requested his friend, the Essene, to be their guide, as the road was intricate even to those who had frequently travelled it. The Essene, at home amidst these solitudes, readily complied, and led them through ravines, amidst precipices, through sandy plains destitute of vegetation, and over naked hills. Always alert and ready to assist, he went before them, gave them his hand in difficult parts of the way, supported the elder men in the steeper ascents, and answered every question that was addressed to him, but so briefly that he seemed to weigh every word, and to be in perpetual apprehension of allowing one that was superfluous to escape his lips.

In answer to the question of Elisama, whence the name of Essene was derived, he informed them that it was Persian, and denoted the resemblance of their life to that of bees. "We learn from them to be unwearied in our diligence, to live in brotherly union, to be without distinction of sex in respect to desire, and to gather stores for the supply of others." Their contempt for the female sex and aversion from matrimony displeased Elisama, who called the latter an ordinance of God, and pronounced it a vain and presumptuous thought of man, to wish to annihilate the distinction of sex, when the Creator had made the human race male and female.

Selumiel endeavored to silence Elisama, by reminding him

that nearly all the members of this community were old men. But the Essene himself would not accept this explanation; he maintained that this opinion was intimately and necessarily connected with the rest of their system. "The body as ye see," said he, "is perishable and its elements forever changing; the soul is immortal and unchangeable. Sprung from the purest ether, it is drawn down to the body by a certain natural impulse, and kept as it were imprisoned there while the body continues to exist. When freed from the fetters of the flesh, it rejoices like those delivered from a long and galling bondage, and wings its flight upwards. The souls of the just are conducted to an abode, beyond the ocean, of indescribable delight, where neither rain nor snow deforms the sky, and mild sea-breezes temper the rays of the sun. The wicked, on the contrary, are condemned to eternal thraldom and torment in a dwelling of frost and darkness. Should not then every soul abhor and shun intemperance and pleasure, as its worst enemies, and renounce every gratification which would give the body an ascendency over it, while it cultivates sobriety and chastity as the means of making its present captivity more tolerable, and of being ultimately delivered from it?"

The Essene spoke thus, animated in the defence of his doctrines, and almost forgetting the ordinary conciseness of his discourse. When he had ended, he turned abruptly round, after a brief salutation to the travellers. A hill higher than any in the desert, and equally bare, though on its verge, stood before them. They looked back, and saw the Essene vanishing among the intricacies of the path which they had just quitted, carefully holding his garments together, and hastening back to his brethren, without looking to the right hand or to the left. Helon seemed to breathe more freely as they emerged from this region of desolation. Selumiel, looking back towards the Oasis, and leaning on his staff asked his companions, "Now, then, how like ye my Essenes?"

"Call them not *thy* Essenes," said Elisama, "for, Jehovah be praised, there is a wide difference between them and thee."

"Allow me this," said Selumiel, "and I will in return allow thee to speak of *thy* Pharisees."

"That," said Elisama, very earnestly, "I shall never be; call me an Aramæan Jew, and I shall gladly accept the title."

"What difference should one or the other make in our friendship?" said Selumiel. "Cannot we attach ourselves to different opinions, without any breach of our mutual good-will? Iddo takes it ill if I call him a Sadducee."

"Alas for Israel," said Elisama; "shall peace never come to thee? It has been a melancholy reflection to me, that in the land where alone Israel is truly Israel, I have scarcely found a single old friend who does not lean to one sect or other. What will be the end of these things?"

The young priest dissatisfied with the turn which their conversation had taken, said hastily, and in a manner which neither of the old men understood, "In my service in the temple one thing only displeased me, that the turn of duty comes to each course of priests but once in twenty-four weeks. I fain would live the life of a priest every week and every day."

"You might have discovered the method of doing so this very day," said Selumiel.

"The Essenes do not sacrifice," said Helon; "how then shall I find among them a perpetual priesthood?"

Elisama looked at him with astonishment. Selumiel, rejoiced as if he had come over to his opinion, replied, "You may find it in the daily mortification of your body and obedience to the law."

"No," said Elisama, "I will tell you — the conjugal and domestic life is the perpetual priestoood. You know that the patriarchs sacrificed with their own hands, and even now the master of the house becomes priest, when, at the feast of the Passover, he kills the lamb, blesses the bread, and praises

Jehovah. In spite of all the Essenes and their admirers," said he, looking significantly at Selumiel, "it is my opinion that the true Chasidean must be the father of a family."

Selumiel stretched out his hand to the friend of his youth: they turned round, and scarcely had they advanced a few steps further when they had reached the summit of the hill, and the garden of God, the plain of Jericho, lay before them. The towers of the city arose from amidst the fertile fields, through which the silver Jordan wound its course. From the valley of death through which they had just passed, they had emerged into a scene where life displayed itself in all its luxuriance and fulness. The wide meadows through which the Jordan rolled were adorned by groups of towering palm-trees and balsam bushes; the hills on both sides closed in the landscape with a beautifully picturesque effect. The air was fragrant with the odor of the roses which bear the name of Jericho. The note of the quail was heard in the corn-fields, the eagle swept his majestic way through the air, and the stork and the pelican strode stately beside the flood.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BETROTHMENT.

Selumiel led his friends from Egypt through the gate of Jericho. Not far from it stood a house distinguished from all in its neighborhood by its size and the style of the architecture. It was the house of Selumiel, who filled the office of an elder in Jericho. He had scarcely bidden his guests welcome in the outer court, and invited them to enter the inner by the covered way, when his son met him with his new-born grandson. The joy of the old man was indescribable. "You see," said he to his guests, when he had led

them to the fountain under the palms, and had called the slaves to wash their feet, "you see by my joy at the sight of my grandchild, that notwithstanding all I have said in their praise, I do not belong to the highest class of the Essenes. While the slaves do their duty, allow me to take a short walk into the Armon."

Selumiel's house was built in such a way, that it enclosed a large open quadrangular space, called Chazer, or Thavech, (the middle or inner court,) which, under a sky that was almost uninterruptedly serene, served as a great chamber, even on great and festive occasions. The pavement was composed of variegated marble, tastefully disposed. In the middle, where in houses of humbler construction a simple basin stood, was a fountain, enclosed with marble and surrounded with lofty palms, which cast such a cooling shade beneath, that our travellers felt themselves instantly refreshed. In the angles stood rows of vases filled with flowers, especially the roses of Jericho, and many other odoriferous shrubs, planted in bowers. Their grateful shade, and the ever fresh and green turf around the fountain, made the coolness as it were visible, which in the hottest days was to be found there. On the sides of this quadrangle stood three rows of pillars, forming two parallel porticoes. The floor of them was covered with carpets and cushions of very elaborate workmanship, and before some of the pillars hung curtains, which gave the space behind the convenience of an enclosed chamber. The cushions were embroidered with gold and silver, and the curtains were of silk, red, white, green, and blue. Against the interior side of the porticoes were divans and sofas, elevations of the height of from two to three feet, which were surrounded with a lattice, and in the day time were covered with carpets and served as seats, in the night were used as beds. Above, the porticoes were covered by three galleries one above another, for the house had three stories, and each gallery had a parapet breast-high towards the court.

Round this court the principal parts of the house were dis-

posed. The side which adjoined the street contained a small court, separated from the inner only by a wall and a door, contrary to the common mode of building, according to which this court lay beyond the outer wall in front of the house, being connected with it by a covered way: some houses again had both the small internal court, which we have described in Selumiel's house, and the larger exterior court, the latter then serving to receive horses and camels. In Selumiel's house the court was furnished with a sofa, visitors were received here, and only those whom the master of the house specially invited into the interior went any further. The house door, which was in the wall of the house and was covered with inscriptions, led to the outer court. In this court was a staircase, which led to the upper stories of the house and immediately to a little building directly over the small interior court, called Alijah, which rose like a tower upon the flat roof. An awning was fastened to the parapet of the roof in such a manner, that it could be drawn over the whole of the innermost court, and produce complete shade in the brightest sunshine.

The side of the court which was farthest from the street formed the communication with the Armon, or house of the women. The apartments of the females were universally in the East separate from those of the men, and in Selumiel's mansion they formed a distinct house, divided and arranged much in the same way as we have already described, so that there were in fact two houses, having one side in common.

Elisama and Helon had been so much occupied with the splendor which they beheld around them, that they had allowed the slaves with their silver ewers to wait, without performing their office. Selumiel re-entered, and said, smiling, to Elisama, observing how he was occupied, "Doubtless you are used to see more splendid edifices in Alexandria." "Nay," said Elisama, laughing, "I recall what I said on the way. An elder of Israel who dwells so sumptuously and tastefully is assuredly no Essene." Selumiel led his guests

into one of the bowers, and after they had rested here a short time, to the richly spread table. When the dishes were taken away, and the dessert set on, the mother and her daughter appeared, to bid a solemn welcome to the guests from Egypt — a condescension which showed the esteem in which Selumiel held them. The mother, though advanced in years, was active and still handsome; but Sulamith her daughter, who stood by her side, was glowing in all the freshness of youthful beauty, and united in herself every charm by which a daughter in Israel could fix the attention of the beholder. From beneath the large eyebrows, colored of a brilliant black, dark eyes, like those of the gazelle, sent forth their quiet brilliancy, through the transparent veil which descended from the turban. Her tall and stately form was clad in a robe of fine cotton, which flowed down in folds like a wide mantle; the sleeves hung loose, except where they were fastened with costly bracelets; the ears and the nose were adorned with rings of gold, in which rubies, emeralds, and topazes were set. Helon dazzled by so much beauty, on which he hardly dared to gaze, and agitated by an emotion which he had never felt before, thought he read in the looks with which the old men regarded his surprise, the interpretation of some words which had occasionally escaped Elisama and Selumiel, and which till now he had not understood.

When the females had retired, and the men continued their conversation, Selumiel's son addressed himself to Helon, and proposed to him that in the coolness of the early morning on the following day he would be his guide through the region round Jericho, and as far as to the Dead Sea. Helon, lost in feelings to which he had hitherto been a stranger, had scarcely heard the conversation of the elders; but he was roused from his revery by this offer, which it was the more difficult to decline without discourtesy, as an oriental seldom imposes on himself the fatigue of a walk. Yet it seemed to him as if he were forcibly torn from that world of delightful illusions to which he had just been transported.

At the first dawn of the following day, the two young men issued from the mansion of Selumiel, into the streets of Jericho. The city is about six sabbath-day's journeys from Jordan, and three sabbath-day's journeys in circumference. It was considered at this time as the second city in Judea, and had been in ancient times one of the thirtyone royal cities of Canaan. It was chiefly inhabited by priests, whose number was estimated by some as high as twelve thousand.

The son of Selumiel was well acquainted with the ancient history of his nation, and had discovered Helon's enthusiasm for everything that recalled it. As they quitted the city he pointed to the other side of the Jordan. "There," said he, "our forefathers encamped in the fields of Moab, opposite to Jericho, and thither Balak the king of Moab summoned Balaam to curse them.* The blue hill seen far in the distance is the hill of Abarim, and part of it is Nebo, to which Jehovah led Moses and showed him the land which he was not permitted to enter,† the future heritage of the children of Israel. Thence Joshua sent out spies to explore the land, and especially Jericho, when Rahab saved them by her humanity.‡ There," pointing to the banks of the Jordan itself, "our fathers crossed the flood, Jehovah renewing the miracle by which they had passed through the Red Sea.§ They destroyed the city, and not only exterminated every living thing, but their leader laid a curse on him who should rebuild it, which six hundred years afterwards fell on Hiel of Bethel, whose eldest son died when he laid the foundation of it, and the youngest when he set up the gates.‖ Yet its sanctity was recovered by the residence of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, who long dwelt here, and the schools of the prophets which they superintended. In later times we must confess, with grief, that it was here the valiant chief and high-priest Simon, father of Hyrcanus, fell by the hand of his son-in-law."¶

Helon thanked his companion for his information, dissatis-

* Numb. xxii. † Deut. xxxiv. ‡ Josh. ii. § Josh. iii.
‖ Josh. vi. 26. 1 Kings xvi. 34. ¶ 1 Maccab. xvi. 14.

fied with himself that the present and the past contended with each other for the possession of his mind. They continued their way to an eminence, from which they had a prospect scarcely to be equalled even in the Holy Land itself. They had here a view of the course of the Jordan. In its progress from its source in Antilibanus, a course of about one hundred sabbath-day's journeys, it had attained a breadth of thirty paces; it is about the depth of a man, and in the neighborhood of Jericho it has a strong current. It abounds in fish, and its banks were overgrown with sedges, reeds, willows, and tamarisks, among which, jackals, lions,* and other wild beasts harbored. The river had just overflown its banks,† in consequence of the snows of Lebanon, and this annual exundation greatly promoted the fertility of the adjacent fields. On the banks of Jordan lies Gilgal, the place where the people of Israel, crossed over under Joshua, and erected twelve stones as a memorial. A little further on was Bethabara, where the pilgrims from Galilee crossed to the eastern side of the Jordan, in order to avoid going through the country of the Samaritans. Thus a great part of the beautiful valley of the Jordan lay before them, whose fertile fields are enclosed by hills on each side, on the east by the mountains of Judah, on the west by Abarim, with the summits of Pisgah and Nebo on Peor, followed by the mountains of Moab. Southward they beheld the plain of Jericho, ten sabbath-day's journeys in length and almost three in breadth, extending to Engedi, containing the celebrated grove of palms,‡ adorned with olives and balsam shrubs, and known in all the ancient world for its honey and its roses. Joining this plain, the Dead Sea extended itself far to the south, called also the Sea of the Plain, from its vicinity to the plain of Jordan; the Salt Sea, from the taste of its waters; and the Eastern Sea, in contradistinction from the Mediterranean, which lay westward of Palestine. It was formed in the time of Lot and Abraham, by the destruction of the towns of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah,

* Jer. xlix. 19. † Josh. iii. 15. ‡ Deut. xxxiv. 3.

and Zeboim, the place of which this lake now covers.* Its length amounts to eightythree, its breadth to twentyone sabbath-day's journeys; its waters, being impregnated with naptha and asphaltus, are salt and bitter; and all around it had the appearance of conflagration, because the frequent exundations of the lake covered the adjacent soil with a coating of salt.

The world of external nature is but the mirror which reflects to us what interests our feelings in the world of man. Helon had never looked on the beauties of nature with so true a relish for them, as now that they gave him back the image of his own fond hopes and gay imaginations; nor had he ever felt so deeply the impression of her awful scenes, as now when they harmonized so well with the trembling anxiety which chastised his hopes.

On their return to the house they found all busy with preparations for the solemnity of the circumcision of Selumiel's grandson, which was to take place on the following morning. At the third hour accordingly of the next day, a large company assembled in Selumiel's house. Besides the two witnesses, who must be married persons of either sex, ten men were necessary, in whose presence the circumcision was to take place, and besides these had been invited the heads of all the courses of priests who lived in Jericho, the elders and the friends of Elisama. The family remembered the command of God to Abraham, "This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy posterity after thee: every male child among you shall be circumcised, when he is eight days old; and the uncircumcised male child shall be cut off from his people, because he hath broken my covenant."†

The rite was performed in the largest apartment of the house, and by the hand of the grandfather, in the presence of the whole assemblage. A psalm was sung, alluding to the covenant which God had made with his people Israel, and

* Gen. xix. 24—26. † Gen. xvii. 9.

then the song of Moses after the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The rite was then begun; in the midst of it, the father of the child said, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, king of the world, who hast sanctified us by thy precepts, and commanded us to enter into the covenant of Abraham." Those who stood around replied, "Lord, as thou hast permitted this child to enter into the covenant of our father Abraham, grant also that he may enter into thy law, into the marriage-state, and into good works." Selumiel then laid his hand upon the child's head, and asked the father what its name should be. The father, in honor of the guests from Egypt, who were then present, replied, "His name shall be called Mizraim." The grandfather, then prayed, "O Lord our God, God of our fathers, strengthen this child and preserve him to his parents. His name shall be called in Israel, Mizraim, son of Abisuab, the son of Selumiel."

The boy was then carried back to his mother, and all who were present congratulated the father and the grandfather. Selumiel invited them to the inner court, where they partook of refreshments and remained till afternoon, when a splendid banquet was served up, consisting of everything which one of the wealthiest citizens of Jericho could collect for such an occasion. Two oxen, twenty lambs, and twelve fatted calves were killed; for the master of the feast was thought to show his wealth and his hospitality by the unexpected abundance of every kind of food that was produced. Every guest found in the fore-court a splendid caftan, which he put on for the feast, and deposited there again on his departure. These garments were always in readiness to be worn on festive occasions, and their number and costliness was one of the surest pledges of the master's wealth. The guests, after their feet had been washed, were anointed with costly ointment, and when they took their leave they were perfumed, especially the beard.

Sulamith and her mother did not appear today, but confined themselves to the chamber of Abisuab's wife, and celebrat-

ed the festival there. Helon had seen Sulamith only once and in passing on the preceding day, but her image had remained involuntarily imprinted upon his mind. In the midst of the lively conversation which passed at the banquet, the proverbs which were quoted and the riddles which were propounded, she was always present to his thoughts, and so animated the powers of his mind, that his eloquence and ingenuity drew on him the attention of all. When he laid himself down on the divan beside his uncle, he could not sleep nor rest, and to calm the tumult of his breast he arose, and passing through the courts, ascended the Alijah, and there, kneeling, prayed to the God of his fathers. But his prayer partook of the general state of his feelings; unable to collect his thoughts sufficiently for meditation, he could only pour out before Jehovah the fulness of a grateful heart.

It was just beginning to dawn when he left the Alijah, and walked up and down upon the roof. The stars were dim; the hills of Moab lay in darkness, and the Dead Sea was wrapt in vapor, but on the summits of the hills of Judah the first distant beam of light appeared to break. "What are they doing now in the temple?" he asked himself; "perhaps they are changing the watch, or clearing the altar, or opening the gates that Israel may come up and appear before Jehovah. And how is the venerable old man of the temple employed?" He remembered with gratitude how much light he had derived from his conversations with him, and then the warning recurred to his mind which he had received from him. He now fully comprehended its meaning. In the journey through the desert, in the visit to the Essenes, in the discourse of Elisama and Selumiel, and the conversation of the priests at the banquet, he had found abundant proofs of the truth of the old man's assertions respecting the parties by which Israel was distracted. He grieved to think that the highest and the noblest in Israel were arrayed against each other in hostile sects; that simplicity of faith and purity of life were so little honored, and heathen philosophy, in a Jewish garb, exalted to

the throne. "Should the Messiah come," said he, "I verily believe that, after having disputed about his claims, they would finish by all rejecting him. The priests themselves descend from their dignity, as the appointed conservators of divine knowledge, to the wranglings of human philosophy, and the light of heavenly truth, which they should transmit pure and direct, is absorbed or diverted by the gross medium through which it passes; and thus this unhappy land, so awfully chastised by the justice of God, so graciously received back to favor by his mercy, is deprived of the bliss which Providence designed for it. Who could have believed," he continued, "when a few weeks ago I approached Jerusalem, when I saw for the first time the temple and the priests, and all my wish was to be enrolled among them and to dwell on the hill which Jehovah has chosen for his peculiar presence, who could have believed that so short a time would have made everything appear to me so tame and common? Is the fault my own, that I pass too easily from the one extreme to the other; or am I disappointed, that, instead of a perpetual ministration before Jehovah, I am only called at long intervals and for a short time to appear in his temple? Yet surely even this might be sufficient to keep alive my zeal, were it not that the moment he quits the temple the dreams of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes again take possession of the mind of a priest, and seduce him into transgressions of the law. What hope then, under such circumstances, of becoming a Chasidean? There was another priesthood of which Elisama spoke, as we stood together at the foot of that pointed hill. O that I could be but assured that I was not mistaken in the meaning of his often repeated hints!" As he spoke his face turned involuntarily towards the Armon. Some one came behind him and touched him on the shoulder; it was Elisama. He started, as if it were possible that he might have heard his soliloquy, and could scarcely return his uncle's salutation. "I am glad," said Elisama, with a serious look, "to find you here alone: for some days past I have wished for an opportu-

nity of speaking to you alone on important matters. Let us go into the Alijah, we shall be most secure there from the danger of interruption.

"When we left Egypt it was all thy wish to see the land of thy fathers: thy mother had another wish. Thou art of that age when the youth of Israel take to themselves wives. Doubtless we are all agreed in this, that thy wife should not come from any Hellenistic family. Among the Aramæan Jews of Alexandria, there was none with whom so near a connexion would have been honorable for us. Besides, it is thy mother's wish that her daughter-in-law should be, as she herself was, a native of the Holy Land. I have been occupied in looking around for a wife for thee. What sayest thou to Sulamith, the daughter of Selumiel?"

Helon fell at his uncle's feet, and embracing his knees, exclaimed, "Is it possible? Ah! give me Sulamith!"

"Rise," said Elisama. "May Jehovah bless you both! I have already settled the conditions with Selumiel in Jerusalem, and we kept silence, only that we might see whether Sulamith would please you. He wished to have a priest for a son-in-law, and one who should not come empty-handed."

"O give my whole fortune, if he demands it," said Helon.

"At this moment he is speaking with Sulamith." Looking throught the lattice of the Alijah, he saw Selumiel passing along the court, and called to him to come up to them. He came and Helon fell before him on his face.

"I know enough," said he, "I will call my wife and daughter—follow me to the large saloon of the Armon."

He led them from the Alijah through the outer and inner court to the Armon, which no foot of a male stranger had ever trodden before. He left them standing in the richly adorned saloon, and went to call Sulamith and her mother. They came with him, and the brother also made his appearance. The mother was in tears: Sulamith stood with her face completely veiled. Elisama then came forward and said, "If ye will deal kindly and truly with my nephew He-

lon, tell me, and give him this your daughter Sulamith to wife; and if not, tell me that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."* Then Selumiel and Abisuab answered, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord, therefore we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold Sulamith is before thee; take her and go thy way, that she may be the wife of thy nephew Helon." Elisama and Helon bowed themselves to the earth; and Elisama said, "I will pay thee for thy daughter ten thousand shekels." "I will give them to her for her dowry," said Selumiel, "and add to them ten thousand more." Then Selumiel, turning to Sulamith, said, "Wilt thou go with this man into the land of Egypt, or remain with him in Jericho, as Jehovah shall appoint?" Sulamith, sobbing, answered, "Yes." Then the mother led her daughter to Helon, whose joy was without bounds; she bowed down before him, and he took her by the hand and raised her up. The father, the mother, and the brother of the bride, along with Elisama, then drew near to them, and blessed them both, and said, "May ye grow and multiply a thousand times, and may your seed possess the gate of your enemies!"

The company which had assembled on the preceding day was again invited, and Selumiel said to his astonished guests, "Rejoice with me, my friends, and bless the God of our fathers. I have received from Jehovah two children, a grandson and a son-in-law."

Elisama remained in Selumiel's house. Helon, so propriety required, took up his abode in a neighboring house; but through the day he was chiefly in the Armon of his Sulamith. The more intimately he became acquainted with her, the higher his love and admiration rose. Every day discovered to him some new excellence, her deep piety, her gentle temper, her quick sensibility, her sound understanding, and playful, harmless wit. In whatever occupation he had seen her, whatever had been the subject of their conversation, he always returned home at evening more grateful to God.

* Gen. xxiv. 49.

The sabbath and the new moon, all the solemnities of religion had become more interesting to him, and his confidence revived, that with such a daughter of Israel by his side, he should be able to keep the whole law, and perhaps even become a Chasidean.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

The feast of Pentecost drew near. It derived this name, which is Greek, and its Jewish name of the Feast of Weeks,* from the circumstance that seven weeks or fifty days elapsed between it and the day after the Passover, on which the first-fruits of barley were offered, so that it was the fiftieth day from that time. It fell on the sixth day of the third month Sivan, and the days between the offering of the sheaf and it were solemnly reckoned every evening, at the time of supper. The master of the house, rising up with the rest of the company, said, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, king of the world, who hast sanctified us with thy precepts, and commanded us to count the days of harvest," adding, this is the fifth day, or one week, and the third day, and so on. In this way they thought that they were fulfilling the command of the law, "Seven weeks shall ye reckon; begin to reckon the seven weeks from the time when thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn; and thou shalt keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord thy God."†

Helon wished, in virtue of his priestly office, to travel to Jerusalem; Abisuab and his wife were going up to present their new-born child before Jehovah; Sulamith was glad to join herself to her brother and sister-in-law; and Selumiel and Elisama had to comply with the law, which enjoins that

* Exod. xxxiv. 22. † Deut. xvi. 9.

all males should appear, thrice in the year, at each of the great festivals before Jehovah. The preparations were already made, and the day of the pilgrimage was very near.

On the fortyseventh day Helon was sitting with Sulamith beside the fountain in the inner court of the Armon. They were conversing on the office of the priest: Sulamith expressed her joy in the thought that she should see her betrothed husband ministering at the altar of Jehovah; and Helon declared what increased delight he should have in every service, when he reflected that the eyes of his Sulamith accompanied him from place to place. As they conversed thus together, the well-known sound of cymbal and flute was heard, accompanied by more than a thousand human voices. "It is the Galileans going up to the festival," said Sulamith, listening as the sacred sounds seemed to descend from heaven into the court where they were sitting. Helon hastened forth to greet them. Although Samaria was destroyed, they still took their ancient road by Bethabara and Jericho, in preference to that by Sichem, especially as in the former track their train was swollen by accessions from every village through which they passed. They were now about to pass through Jericho, and to encamp at the western gate. Welcomes and greetings met them from every house.

On the following morning, when the pilgrims from Jericho were going to unite with them, the long-standing hatred between the Jews and the Galileans displayed itself. The Galileans, who occupied the country which had formerly made a part of the kingdom of Israel, had adopted many customs from the heathen among whom they lived; inhabiting a fertile region, they lived in the possession of many physical comforts, but neglected the cultivation of literature and knowledge, and their uncouth pronunciation,* by which the guttural letters were confounded, bore witness to the low state of refinement among them. Their Jewish brethren

* "Thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto." — Mark xiv. 70.

were proud of superior knowledge, as the Galileans of superior wealth, and they seldom came together without some explosion. The present dispute was about precedence in the march. The men of Jericho claimed it, as genuine Jews and inhabitants of a city of priests, reproaching the Galileans that their ancestors were only the common people of the land, left behind when the great and noble were carried into captivity. The men of Jericho at length prevailed: Selumiel, as elder of the city, led the march with the heads of the courses of priests; the Levites struck up their music, and all the people sung together,

> The city whose foundation is in the holy mountains,
> The gates of Zion, Jehovah loves
> More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
> Glorious is it to speak of thee
> O City of God!
> Of Zion it is said,
> This and that man was born in her.
> He, the Most High buildeth her.
> When God reckoned up the people
> He wrote, This man was born there. — Ps. lxxxvii.

Thus the train quitted the smiling fields of Jericho, and entered the wilderness, which they crossed by a nearer way than that which led by the Oasis of the Essenes. By midday they had reached a verdant spot, shaded with palm-trees, and encamping beneath them, opened their wallets, and distributing their provisions, endeavored to exhilarate themselves amidst the desolation which surrounded them. Sulamith, sitting between her father and her bridegroom, had taken her sister's first-born from her arms and playfully placed it on her lap, when a Galilean approached them and asked Selumiel, if Elisama and Helon from Alexandria were with him. Selumiel having pointed them out to him, he informed them that he was charged with the salutations of a young Greek of Alexandria, of the name of Myron, whom he had recently seen in his visit to Damascus. Myron had commissioned him at the same time to say that his affairs would not allow

him to come to Jerusalem at Pentecost. He regretted that he must thus lose their society on his return to Egypt, which had been a source of so much pleasure to him on his journey thence. If, however, they could wait, he requested to be informed by this Galilean, who was about to return to Damascus immediately after the feast.

"A fair opportunity," said Selumiel's son, "for you, Helon, to meet him in the north of Judea, and bring him to the festivities of the marriage; while you at the same time visit that part of the Holy Land which you have not seen. I know what you are going to object — but while preparations for the nuptials are going on, no one can be more easily spared, even by the bride, than the bridegroom." Selumiel agreed; and notwithstanding the remonstrances of Helon and Sulamith, it was finally arranged that the Galilean should carry back word to Damascus, that Helon would meet Myron, in three weeks' time, at Dan, the frontier town of Judea on the north.

The pilgrims resumed their march, the desert was soon left behind, and Bethany with its gardens and olive-yards appeared. The train ascended the mount of Olives and wound along its western descent, among the cedars in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The temple, which was seen from this side under its most imposing aspect, was brightening with the glow of sunset; and the whole city, with its hollows and eminences, and the white tents which in some places were erected, and in others erecting, partook of the illumination of the evening lights. Companies of pilgrims hastened from all sides to the city, but none drew the attention of the spectators more than that which was descending the mount of Olives.

Selumiel and his party were received with undiminished hospitality into the house of Iddo, who poured out his hearty congratulations to Sulamith and Helon, telling the latter that from the time when he had first seen him, he had anticipated that they should be more nearly related.

When the friendly greetings and compliments were concluded, they repaired to supper, and Iddo counted the forty-eighth day from the offering of the first-fruits.

The following day was the preparation for Pentecost, and was passed in bathing, cutting off the hair, and other purifyings. An hour after the evening-sacrifice Helon went up to the temple and knocked at the door of the old man's cell. "Welcome to Azereth!" he exclaimed, as Helon entered. Azereth, or Day of Assembly, was the name given to the day of Pentecost as well as to the seventh of the Passover, and to the eighth of the Feast of Tabernacles. "Give us thy blessing," said Helon; and as he knelt down the old man stretched out his hands upon his head and blessed him. Helon then asked him to explain the design of the feast which was about to commence. "As," said he, "when the first barley sheaf was offered, we prayed to Jehovah for his blessing upon the harvest, so now that both the barley and the wheat are gathered in, we thank him that he has given us the early and the later rain, and dew from heaven, and the appointed weeks of harvest. Thus the Pentecost is a harvest feast; but it is also a commemoration of the giving of the law: for it was on this fiftieth day, the sixth after Israel's arrival in the wilderness of Sinai, and the third after the purification of the people, that Moses led them out of the camp to meet Jehovah, and to receive the law amidst the thundering and lightning, and the sound of the trumpet. But pray to God that he would disclose to thee the sublimer meaning which lies hidden under these more obvious purposes. Bethink thee of that approaching time, when all the gifts of Jehovah shall be poured out upon his kingdom on earth, when all prayers shall be granted, and the law shall be universally known and kept in its purest and most spiritual sense. Let this thought guide thy devotions at the feast. And now, if thou art pure, go to the evening sacrifice. Hark! the trumpet announces that the Pentecost is about to begin."

Helon departed, was present at the evening sacrifice, and remained in the temple through the night with all the priests who had assembled at Jerusalem for the festival. On the following day the principal duty fell to the course whose week

was just beginning; but there was so much to be done beyond the common offices, that they needed the aid of the others. The dissensions of the Pharisees and Sadducees were more visible than ever, and ceased not even in the temple and on the holy night.

The gates were opened, and among the rest who filled the courts before the crowing of the cock, Iddo, Selumiel, Abisuab, and Elisama presented their victims to the priests; and Sulamith with the wife of Iddo and her own sister-in-law were in the court of the Women. The ordinary morning-sacrifice was first offered, then the special offering of the festival, consisting of seven lambs of the first year, a young bullock and two rams for a burnt-offering, a goat for a sin-offering, and two yearling sheep for a thank-offering. The difference between the offerings on this occasion and at the Passover was, that there were then two bullocks and one ram offered, and now two rams and one bullock.* When the drink-offering was poured out, the priests blew upon their pillars, the Levites sung on the fifteen steps, and the whole congregation sung the great Hallel.

Now came the special offering of the Pentecost. It consisted of two loaves and a tenth of an ephah of fine wheat flour, the first-fruits of the harvest, which a priest had waved before Jehovah towards all the four winds of heaven, in the open space between the altar and the sanctuary. When this offering had been presented to Jehovah, the sacrifices of individuals began. Selumiel, his son, and Elisama, brought their noble victims; thousands followed them, and among the rest, Helon offered his thank-offering, and paid to the Lord the vow which he had formed in the happy hour of his betrothment. Selumiel's son offered for the purification of his wife, as it chanced to be the fortieth day from her delivery, a lamb of the first year as a burnt-offering and a turtle-dove as a sin-offering. She prayed while they were slain, and a priest, bringing the blood of the sin-offering in a

* Lev. xxiii. 18.

dish, sprinkled her with it, and thus she became clean. She had brought her first-born in her arm, and presented him before Jehovah ; and her husband redeemed him according to the law by the payment of five shekels.* For thus said Jehovah, "Behold I have taken the Levites unto myself among the children of Israel, instead of all the first-born; therefore the Levites shall be mine. For the first-born are mine, since the time when I slew all the first-born in Egypt: then did I set apart all the first-born in Israel, both of man and beast, that they should be mine. I am Jehovah."†

When all these were ended, and the blessing given to the people in the name of Jehovah, Iddo, with the assistance of his own slaves and of Sallu, presented his own thank-offering. The wife of Abisuab, Sulamith, and the wife of Iddo, partook of the feast which the sacrifice furnished in one of the apartments in the temple, and in addition to them some priests and Levites who had been bidden. Helon, once more in the temple, in sight of the crowds of worshippers who poured in streams along its courts, within hearing of the solemn sound of the temple music, surrounded by all the circumstances which made this consecrated spot a little world within itself; and seated by his Sulamith, forgot his native country Egypt, his longings for his mother and his home, and nothing occupied his thoughts, but the wish to live in the Holy Land as a priest of Jehovah, and to endeavor to fulfill the law, with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength.

The Feast of Pentecost lasted only one day.

* Numb. xviii. 15. † Numb. iii. 12.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE JOURNEY TO DAN.

On the day which followed the feast of Pentecost, Helon stood upon the highest of the three summits of the mount of Olives, and with a heavy heart and weeping eyes watched the train of the pilgrims from Jericho, as they disappeared among the groves and gardens of Bethany, and listened to their songs, in which the voice of Sulamith seemed to warble to him a farewell, full of affection and regret. It had cost him many a struggle, to resolve to undertake this journey to Dan — but Selumiel had determined to put his self-command to this proof, and Helon was forced to comply. There was a certain hardness in Selumiel's natural disposition, which the influence of an amiable wife had not entirely mollified; he had been compelled in his youth to practise much self-denial and bear many mortifications, and he could not deny himself the pleasure of making even those he loved undergo a similar discipline, persuading himself perhaps that he was improving their tempers, while he was indulging his own. "The path of obedience is arduous and rough," said Helon with a sigh, as he turned from where the Jordan wound its way through the meadows of Jericho, to the northern hills of Ebal and Gerizim, over which his destined journey lay; "the path of obedience is rough, but it shall be trodden." He called to mind the first commandment with promise, and he thought that when he had made this sacrifice to the sense of duty, he should be able, without difficulty, to fulfil the rest of the commandments, and become a Chasidean. Ambition came to the aid of virtue, and he returned towards the city, resolved, though not satisfied.

On the following morning he took his departure, in company with the Governor of Samaria, whom Hyrcanus had

just appointed, and some Galilean Jews, who preferred returning into their own country by the nearer way. Iddo accompanied his friend as far as the gate of Ephraim. The travellers were mounted, and attended by such a train as became the rank of the principal person in the party. They entered the King's valley, and directed their course between Mizpa and Nob towards Geba, which lay not far from Rama, the city where Samuel judged,* called in latter times Arimathea. The road was stony; the conversation of the party turned wholly on worldly topics. This Geba is also called Geba of Benjamin, to distinguish it from another of the same name: it was celebrated for David's victory over the Philistines.† It lay on a rising ground, six sabbath-day's journeys from Jerusalem, and was one of the cities of the priests.‡ As they had been late in quitting Jerusalem, they halted here for their rest at noon, and as most of the party were disposed to consult their own ease, they remained till late in the afternoon. The road to Mishmash was more steep and rocky than that which they had travelled. Here they had to traverse a defile, between two abrupt and rugged rocks, in the mountains of Ephraim, forming a pass which had been rendered celebrated by the exploits of Jonathan in Saul's first expedition against the Philistines,§ and by the residence of the Maccabee prince Jonathan.‖ They halted for the night at Bethel, a place of which the name often occurs in the sacred writings. This city was sixteen sabbath-day's journeys from Jerusalem, and Helon called to mind that from the mulberry-trees in its neighborhood it had been named Luz, when Abraham dwelt there; that Jacob here saw the vision of the ladder on which the angels ascended and descended, and that rising upon the following morning he built an altar to Jehovah, and called the name of the place Bethel.¶ The ark of the covenant had long stood here; and it was here too, alas, that Jeroboam had set up the worship of the golden calves which he had learnt in Egypt, causing Israel to sin.** The prophets so

* 1 Sam. vii. 17. † 2 Sam. v. 25. ‡ 1 Chron. vi. 60.
§ 1 Sam. xiv. 4. ‖ 1 Mac. ix. 73. ¶ Gen. xxviii. 19. ** 1 Kings xii. 29.

much abhorred its idolatries that they changed its name into Bethaven, *place of unworthiness*; and to go to Bethel, came to signify the same thing as to apostatize from Jehovah to idolatry.*

On the following morning, instead of taking the usual road by Lebona and Gophna, they went by Shiloh, where the governor had business. Shiloh was the first town in Samaria, and peculiarly interesting to Helon, from the circumstance that Joshua came thither from Gilgal,† and that the tabernacle had long stood there. It was very pleasantly situated on a hill, whence the mountains both of Judah and Ephraim might be seen. For nearly three hundred years it was the place in which the tribes assembled, till the tabernacle was removed to Nob‡ and Bethel; afterwards by Saul to Gibeon;§ and finally by David to Jerusalem. It was here that in the times of the Judges the maidens were carried off by violence;‖ here Eli had fallen from his seat, at the news of the capture of the ark by the Philistines.¶ After the mid-day rest at Shiloh, the governor hastened to his residence at Sichem, which was sixteen sabbath-day's journeys from Shiloh, thirtysix from Bethel, and more than fifty from Jerusalem.

Iddo had strongly recommended Helon to the good offices of the governor, who, to do honor to the recommendation, invited him to take up his abode in his own house, which displayed every luxury of furniture, and a numerous train of servants. The pompous condescension, the free life and licentious conversation of the governor, who was a Jew by birth, but a Samaritan in sensuality and worldly mindedness, were so displeasing to Helon, that he would instantly have departed; but his host would not allow him to go without passing a few days with him. He endeavored to console himself by exploring every object of interest in the neighborhood, for which purpose the governor furnished him with attendants and guides.

* Hos. x. 5; Amos iv. 4. † Josh. xviii. 1. ‡ 1 Sam. xxi. 1.
§ 2 Chron. i. 3. ‖ Judges xxi. 16. ¶ 1 Sam. iv. 18.

Sichem lay in a plain, or to speak more accurately, in a valley, which extended to the east and west. On the northern and southern sides of the long line of the city rose the two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, separated by so small an interval, that the voice might be heard from the summit of the one to the summit of the other. Thus sheltered from the pernicious winds of the northwest and southwest, it lay stretched out in picturesque beauty, at the feet of the gigantic guards that seemed stationed for its protection. It was half a sabbath-day's journey in length, but so narrow, that it consisted only of two parallel streets, with an open space between them. The fruitful plain into which the valley expanded was watered by several mountain streams, and diversified by vineyards and olive-yards, plantations of mulberries, and orchards of figs, citrons, and pomegranates. About a sabbath-day's journey from the city on the road to Jerusalem, was the well of Jacob, situated in the field or plain which Jacob had purchased from the children of Hamor.* The well is nine feet in diameter, and a hundred deep, with five feet of water. It was cut in the rock, and a flight of steps descended to the water. In the midst of this lovely plain stood the grove of Moreh.†

From every part of the plain, Sichem and its hills of Ebal and Gerizim were seen. The city seemed more closely connected with Gerizim which lay on the south, than with Ebal on the north. Gerizim was fruitful, abounding in springs and covered with vines and olives; its principal face being turned to the north, it escaped that parching heat which made Ebal scorched and bare. The latter, on the side adjacent to the city was full of caverns, which served the inhabitants as sepulchres.

The natural beauties of this exquisite scene were combined with a multitude of historical associations. The grove of Moreh had been the first resting-place of Abraham, when he entered the land of Promise. Jacob had dug the well, pur-

* Gen. xxxiii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 32. † Gen. xii. 6.

chased the plain, and buried the idols of his wives beneath the terebinth.* The outrage committed by his sons Simeon and Levi had compelled him to retire to Bethel, through fear of the men of Sichem.† Joshua had called the tribes together for the last time to this place,‡ and had caused a stone to be erected on Ebal, as a memorial of the renewal of the covenant with Jehovah. It was Sichem which proclaimed Abimelech king, after he had murdered his seventy brethren; it had also been the first to revolt from him, in consequence of which it was destroyed and sowed with salt.§ At Sichem the schism between Israel and Judah was consummated, and Jeroboam made it the metropolis of the new kingdom.‖ After the erection of the temple on Gerizim, which Hyrcanus had destroyed, Sichem had been for three hundred years the chief seat of the Samaritan idolatry.

Helon dismissed his guides as soon as they had pointed out to him the particular spots, and every morning wandered alone for several hours over the neighborhood. Now he lingered beside the well of Jacob, or traversed the field of the patriarch, or rested in the grove of Moreh; now, from the lofty side of Ebal or Gerizim, beheld the whole landscape spread at his feet. His hours flowed on without his being conscious of their lapse, while, in the dreams of thought, he pictured to himself his approaching happiness, not without a secret feeling of pride in his virtuous resolution, in having quitted Sulamith for a time, in compliance with her father's command. He returned unwillingly towards evening, to take his place among the guests at the luxurious table of the governor, and hear their heartless jests.

Once, however, during his rambles, he found the governor's protection of great importance to him. He had joined some Samaritans who had laid themselves down in the shade of some olives on the sloping side of Gerizim, and were conversing about their temple and their worship, the rites of

* Gen. xxxv. 4. † Gen. xxxiv. ‡ Josh. xxiv. 1.
§ Judges ix. ‖ 1 Kings xii. 25.

which were still celebrated amidst its ruins. They reviled Hyrcanus and his sons, and exalted the memory of Sanballat and Manassch. This was more than Helon could endure. He started up and exclaimed, "Where is your temple? When Moses commanded that on the entrance of the tribes into the promised land, one half should stand on Ebal to curse the ungodly, and the other half on Gerizim to bless the godly, (as was done under Joshua,) he said 'When ye go over the Jordan ye shall raise up stones upon mount Ebal, and plaster them with lime, and there build an altar of stones to Jehovah your God.'* And ye, contrary to the express command of God, have built a temple upon Gerizim!"

The Samaritans arose, and in violent anger exclaimed, "Thou art a Jew, one of those who through hatred against us have corrupted the law, have effaced the name of Gerizim, and inserted that of Ebal."

"It is false," said Helon.

"We alone possess the genuine law," exclaimed the Samaritans. "And ye have the curse," replied Helon with equal emotion.

The dialogue was growing so warm, that Helon might probably have suffered some personal violence from them, had not the officers of justice made their appearance, who carried them all before the governor. He speedily decided the matter, dismissed the Samaritans with scorn — giving Helon at the same time many sarcastic admonitions, to control his zeal and enthusiasm more carefully in future. At the evening's banquet he had again to endure his raillery; and when he was alone he could not help exclaiming, "Well may Sichem be called in Judea *Sichar*, for it is in truth the place of drunkenness and lies!"

On the following morning he took his departure. The governor politely gave him an escort as far as Samaria; fearing, as he said, that he should expose himself to the same dangers as on mount Gerizim. Helon accepted the offer,

* Deut. xxvii. 4; Joshua viii. 30.

but shook off the dust of Sichem from his feet when he quitted it.

Samaria was in the former territory of the tribe of Manasseh. Omri, the sixth king of Israel, and the father of Ahab, built it, and called it after Samer, the possessor of the ground.* Thirza, which had before been the royal residence, having been reduced to ashes, Samaria became the capital of the kingdom of Israel, and remained so till its destruction. At that time it was a league in circumference, was called the head of Ephraim, and contained a magnificent temple of Baal which Jezebel had erected.† It slighted the warnings of Elijah and Elisha, and was destroyed by the Assyrian Salmanasser, after a siege of three years.‡

At this time it was a picture of desolation. The lofty hill on which it once stood, with a view towards Joppa, Carmel, and the Mediterranean sea, was covered with heaps of ruins and water-courses diverted from their channels. Its commanding prospect only made it a more conspicuous monument of the valor and the vengeance of the heroes of Judah and of the wickedness of its inhabitants. A second time the prophetic word of Hosea and Micah had received its accomplishment.§ Helon looked down at once with exultation and gratitude to God upon the scattered huts in which the children of Samaria were hiding themselves, while the sons of Jerusalem were praising Jehovah in their houses and their palaces.

He dismissed the escort of the governor and pursued his way to Thirza, the limits of this day's journey. He had proposed to reach Megiddo, but his progress was arrested by a spectacle equally new and interesting; a tribe of wandering shepherds, who were making their annual migration from the plain of Sharon to mount Hermon. They had been detained later than usual, for they commonly remove early in the spring. The flocks and herds led the way, behind them

* 1 Kings xvi. 24. † 1 Kings xvi. 32.
‡ 2 Kings xvii. 5. § Hos. viii, ix, x.; Micah i. 6.

came camels laden with their tents, baggage, and poultry, and the young of the flocks, which as yet were too weak to accompany the march. The women and children followed, mounted on other camels; some of the females were spinning as they rode, others grinding in their hand-mills, others tending their infant children. The boys ran by the side of the camels, playing or fighting. Lances, from eight to ten feet in length, were everywhere seen above the heads of this tumultuous train; and on all sides were heard the hoarse voices of the men who carried them, some of whom were endeavoring to maintain order, and others surrounded and protected the line of march.

When they reached their ordinary place of encampment, a new scene began; the sheep and goats laid themselves in the grass, the camels knelt down, the poultry flew from their backs. In two hours the dark brown tents were erected. Helon made Sallu assist them, while he himself looked on and enjoyed the animated confusion of the scene. With upright and cross poles a large tent of an oblong form was erected. The coverings were of thick brown stuff made of goat's hair, and the door of the tent was nothing but a curtain of this cloth, which could be lifted up or drawn aside. In the middle was the tent of the chief of this nomadic tribe; the rest were pitched around it, to the distance of thirty paces. Every one of the larger tents was divided into three parts by curtains; in the outermost were the young and tender cattle which required shelter, in the next the men, and in the innermost the women. The mattresses, pillows, and coverlets for sleeping were laid in one corner; the weapons were hung on the sides of the tent; carpets were spread upon the floor, a hole dug in the middle for the fire, and the few and simple articles of household furniture, wooden dishes, vessels of copper, a hand-mill, and bottles of leather, easily found their appropriate place.

Helon beheld, with admiration, the rapid erection of this movable town. The number of the tents was about thirty,

that of the men and women above two hundred, and the cattle amounted to some thousands. Always reminded of the past by the present, he thought he saw the Rechabites, or Israel journeying in the wilderness, or the pastoral wanderings of Abraham and Jacob. "How much more agreeable to nature, how much more favorable to virtue," thought he, "is this life of simplicity and freedom, than the constraint and luxury of the governor's palace!" He laid himself down beside the well, and thought, "what would be wanting to the happiness or to the purity of life, if here, with Sulamith, I could spend my days, far from the cares and the temptations of the busy world!"

The chief of the tribe received him and Sallu hospitably, with their horses and camels, and killed a calf for their entertainment, which the women prepared by roasting in small square pieces. Milk, butter, and cheese formed the rest of their repast. At the first dawn of morning the whole encampment was in motion, to milk the cattle and lead them out to their pasture. Helon often cast his eyes towards the spot where a few scattered cottages marked the place on which the ruins of Thirza stood. Though the city had disappeared, the loveliness of the site still showed why Thirza had been to the Hebrews an emblem for beauty.* Baasha governed Israel from this hill, and Zimri the murderer of his son, after seven days' enjoyment of the fruits of his crime, consumed himself along with the royal palace.† "These," said Helon, "are all passed away; the capital and the kingdom are alike become a tradition; yet the tribes of migrating shepherds still pursue the track which their forefathers kept in ages past!"

About noon a small caravan of merchants arrived, which usually followed the shepherds: they pitched their white tents, and spread their wares out around them. The shepherds came and purchased what they wanted, giving in exchange skins, wool, goats' hair, cheese, and even cattle.

* Cant. vi. 4. † 1 Kings, xv. xvi.

Helon purchased some ornaments, which he designed to be a present to his hospitable entertainer. He remained some days among them, delighted beyond measure with their mode of life, and entering with the liveliest interest into all their occupations. He helped the shepherds to water their flocks from the well, played with the children, and related stories in the evening, when they gathered with their camels around the fire.

Only a few days now remained to the time when he was to meet Myron at Dan. After taking a friendly leave, he directed his course to Megiddo, which lies between the fragrant plain of Sharon on the south, and the great plain of Jezreel on the north. Megiddo is celebrated for the battle in which the kings Ahaziah and Josiah were killed fighting against Neco, king of Egypt.* Helon had come hither to see the great route of the Phœnician commerce, which pursued a course parallel to the sea. He passed Turris Stratonis, a small and now almost abandoned town, but possessed, as he remarked, of an incomparable harbor. Here he was a hundred stadia from Jerusalem. Keeping to the north from Turris Stratonis, he came to Dor, which is also on the sea-coast, and thence by Magdiel to the foot of Carmel.

Carmel joins the plain of Sharon to the south, and the hills of Ephraim to the southeast; and on the north the bay of Acco and the plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon, through which the Kishon runs, rising in mount Tabor, and falling into the sea at the foot of Carmel, after having divided the lands of Issachar and Zebulon. Helon ascended the mountain; it is of great height, and has a wide and beautiful prospect both by land and sea. It is distinguished, as its name expresses, by its fertility. Its very summit is crowned with pines and oaks; its lower regions abound with olives and laurels. Helon, as he stood on it, thought with sacred awe of the victory which the worship of Jehovah had gained over that of Baal, through the energetic zeal of Elijah of Thisba, and

* 2 Kings, xxiii. 29.

of the slaughter of the priests of Baal, which made Kishon run purple to the sea.* As he descended, he found a multitude of Phœnician fishermen engaged in taking the shell-fish from which their celebrated dye is made. There are two species of this fish; one is caught by bait, the other, which is particularly abundant on the shore of Carmel, is gathered from the rocks. The dye is contained in a white vein or bladder in the neck; the Phœnicians made from it fourteen shades of purple, of which the most highly prized, the bright red and the violet, were manufactured with inimitable skill at Tyre. A shepherd's dog which had fed upon the fish, and had thus stained his mouth of a beautiful color, is said to have furnished the first hint for this lucrative article of commerce.

Helon did not proceed from Carmel to Acco,† a Phœnician city on the river Belus, for he had resolved to enter no heathen place on this journey, devoted to exploring the regions of the promised land. Leaving Carmel to the south, a high hill to the north, which bears the name of the Tyrian Climax, (or stair) and the hills of Galilee on the east, he entered the plain of Zebulon. But he often turned to look on the kingly head of Carmel, and to admire the structure of the hills which form the Tyrian Climax, descending, as by a flight of steps, from their highest elevation to the level of the sea. The city of Tyre lay behind these hills.

Quitting Samaria, and entering Galilee, the plain of Zebulon brought him to Gathhepher, the birth-place of the prophet Jonah; and thence he proceeded through the land of Napthali to Thisba, where in ancient times the prophet Elijah, and more recently the pious Tobit,‡ had been born. But neither beautiful scenery nor the gratification of beholding the places where eminent men had lived, could efface from Helon's mind the painful feelings that every step which he took carried him further from Jericho. His pride in the consciousness of fulfilling a duty became less and less able to

*1 Kings, xviii. †Judges, i. 31. ‡Tobit, i. 2.

support him; he thought he had carried his obedience a point too far, and was angry with Selumiel, with Elisama,—with himself. He was therefore rejoiced when he saw in the distance Antilibanus, the southern branch of a chain of mountains, of which the other branch lay in Phœnicia. This was consequently the boundary of the promised land. Its name, Lebanon, was derived from the whiteness of its rocks and peaks, especially from the perennial snow* which covered the head of Hermon, its highest summit. The morning sun was shining on its brilliant peak, as Helon crossed the lesser Jordan, and entered Dan, the frontier town of Judea on the north. He inquired his way to the caravansera, and just halted before it with his horses and camels when Myron came out and embraced him.

Helon joyfully returned his salutation. "And you will be ready," said he, "tomorrow, to set off for Jericho?"

Myron burst into a laugh. "It is true, I see, what the Galilean said, on his return, of the good fortune which has befallen you there. My own good star has brought me to be the witness of your nuptials. Receive my hearty congratulations. How does my venerable Elisama? But our first care must be to give your beasts rest and shelter."

The Grecian levity of Myron's manner was a relief to Helon. They entered the court of the caravansera; in the middle of it was a large cistern of water, from which the horses and camels drank; the baggage was deposited in rooms behind the portico, and fodder for the beasts, with a scanty supply for themselves, was to be purchased of the attendant in the caravansera. When these things were done, Myron and Helon seated themselves in a corner of the portico, where they should be most free from interruption, and Helon related to his friend his adventures since they separated. When his narrative was ended, Myron said, "After you left the caravan at Gaza, I had a melancholy life in the midst of my merchants, none of whom had a single thought

* Jer. xviii. 14.

in common with me. My freedom of speech was perpetually involving me in disputes, out of which I sometimes found it difficult to extricate myself. I remember particularly at Joppa"—

Helon interrupted him to say, that he had heard of the offence which he had given to a citizen of that place, and expressed his regret at Myron's want of caution.

"There is no malice," said Myron, "in my pleasantries; and for the rest be assured, that not one Greek in a hundred really feels such veneration for your religion and your people as I do? When I had seen the singular Tyrian Climax, I had a great curiosity to visit Tyre and Sidon. They were the parents of Carthage, Thebes, Gades in Spain, and many other powerful colonies. Arithmetic, astronomy, geography, navigation, were either invented by them, or at least taught by them to the Greeks. It was Hiram, king of Tyre, as you have told me, who built the eighth wonder of the world, the temple of your king Solomon, at Jerusalem. Even the great invention of alphabetical writing was probably made by them; that of the purple dye is not disputed. There is something too in the situation of Tyre, in the midst of the sea, obliged to supply by her own activity and ingenuity what a narrow and rocky country denied, which made me very desirous of seeing by what institutions she had been able to contend so successfully against natural disadvantages. I found manufactures of glass and purple in full activity, docks crowded with ships, and markets full of silk, wool, cotton, ivory, ebony, and cedar, of all the precious and the useful metals, of wine and oil, of horses, dromedaries, and slaves: but the character of the inhabitants pleased me not: their sagacity is cunning; their polish, the want of force and individuality of character; their pride, the ignoble pride of wealth. I did homage in my own mind to the wisdom of your lawgiver, who chose to form a nation of agriculturists, rather than of merchants.

"How exactly," said Helon, "does your account of the

new Tyre agree with that which our prophet gives of the old. Shall I repeat you a part of it?"

"I shall listen to it most willingly," said Myron. "Since our separation I have wished to hear more of your psalms and prophets, though when we were together I was disposed to complain of excess rather than deficiency."

"Hear then," said Helon, "what Ezekiel spoke:" and he proceeded to quote at length the 27th chapter.

"A splendid, but not an exaggerated picture," said Myron, "of the commerce of Tyre. Yet with all its luxury and splendor it was so little to my taste, that I left it and went to Damascus. But how, Helon, shall I describe to thee this eye of the east, this terrestrial Elysium? Imagine the lovely plain, fruitful, well watered, full of trees and meadows, bordered on both sides by hills, but at a considerable distance; by Antilibanus on the one hand, and the Arabian chain on the other. From Antilibanus ascends a stream which is called Chrysorrhoas: on entering the plain it divides into three branches, of which the principal flows straight towards Damascus, and separating its amber waters into a multitude of little streams, refreshes every street of the city. Reuniting below the city with the other two branches, they all form a lake of great extent on the eastern verge of the plain. In the red soil of which this plain is composed, every variety of fruit-tree grows in greater perfection than elsewhere. The city itself is one of the oldest in the world. I had passed my time there most happily, and nothing would have drawn me from it so soon but your friendly invitation. I have been waiting here for you since yesterday."

On the following morning early they left the caravansera, and turning from Hermon's snowy peak, they passed between the hills of Antilibanus, of which Hermon is only a part, and bending eastward, came first to Paneas. It lies at the foot of a hill, which also belongs to Antilibanus; and the Jordan flows from caverns in the rock. They were wondering at its copiousness, so near its apparent source, when an

inhabitant of Paneas approaching said, "Strangers, this is not the real head of the Jordan. It has already flowed sixteen sabbath-day's journeys under the earth. At that distance, to the east of Paneas, is a little lake, called from its form Phiala, which is constantly receiving the influx of streams, yet, without any visible outlet, never overflows. The reason is, that its waters by a subterraneous channel pass to the hill of Paneas, and break forth there as the Jordan, which from this cause appears of such magnitude at its source." They asked him how the existence of this subterraneous channel was known, and he told them that things which had been thrown into the lake of Phiala had reappeared in the Jordan.

From Paneas they followed the course of the Jordan to the lake Merom,* called also Samochonitis. Before it reaches this lake it receives the lesser Jordan, which rises near Dan; and the Daphne, whose source is not far from the place where it issues from the rock. The lake Merom is ten sabbath-day's journeys long, and five broad, and full of sedge and oozy water. In summer it is so much dried up, that only the bright line of the Jordan's current is visible; and lions, tigers, bears, and other wild animals, harbor in the reeds and bushes with which the rest is overgrown; till, when the snow of Lebanon begins to melt, the Jordan overflows, and fills up the whole basin of the lake.† It was now full. Not being able, owing to the inundation, to take the nearest way to the lake of Genezareth, they struck into the desert, thinking thus to reach Bethsaida, which was at the distance of sixteen sabbath-day's journeys.

They had ridden a long time in the desert, under the burning rays of the sun, and at last discovered that they had missed their way. Perceiving some living figures in the distance, which they took for shepherds, they made towards them in hope of obtaining information. As they came nearer to them the men warned them by gestures to keep at a distance, with hoarse and broken voices, and melancholy

*Josh. xi. 5. †Jer. xlix. 19; Eccles. xxix. 26; Josh. iii. 15.

looks, uttering the words, Unclean, unclean!* "They are lepers," said Helon, with a look of horror, and turning his horse's head, fled with precipitation, followed by the others.

The huts in which these unhappy victims of a loathsome disease dwelt were hard by in the desert. As our travellers were hastening from the scene, they met the relations of the lepers, who dwelt in Bethsaida, and who were bringing them the food by which their miserable existence was to be protracted. The lepers set down their vessels and retired out of sight; the others then came, placed provisions in them with the greatest caution, and carefully avoiding to touch them; and then hastened away, as from the region of death. Father and mother, brother and sister, children and wife, all forsake the miserable leper; scarcely will one of those who are clean venture to bid him peace from afar; and when the provision is no longer fetched away, they rejoice that his sufferings are terminated.

These men had been attacked by the elephantiasis, the most virulent of all the kinds of leprosy. It is gradual in its approaches, a scaly scurf overspreading the body; the nervous system loses its sensibility, the touch grows duller and duller, till it is lost altogether. Little pain is felt by the afflicted person, but dejection and despondency take possession of his mind. The breath becomes corrupt, swellings of the size of a nut are formed, and ulcers cover the body. The nails fall from the fingers and the toes; in some cases these parts themselves drop off; the hair turns gray and falls; all the joints become stiff; and yet, while the unhappy person becomes a burthen to himself and loathsome to all around him, he eats and drinks as usual. This terrible disease is not only in the highest degree contagious, but also hereditary, sometimes continuing in a family to the fourth generation. No wonder that it should be regarded as a judgment of God for some enormous crime.

Helon and his companions continued their hasty flight, till

* Lev. xiii. 45.

they reached the Jordan, which soon conducted them to Bethsaida, which stood at the place where it falls into the lake of Genezareth. Bethsaida is almost wholly inhabited by fishermen, whom they found busily employed with the angle and the net. They called some of them, and were conveyed in one of their boats across the lake to Magdala. The lake of Genezareth, called also the lake of Chinnereth,* and the lake of Galilee, is twenty sabbath-day's journeys long, and six broad. Its waters abound in fish, and are so clear that the stones at the bottom can be seen. Aromatic bulrushes and reeds grow along the shores. The form of the lake is nearly oval, and it lies in a deep vale, which on the east and west is closed in by high mountains, on the north and south expands into a plain. As Helon and Myron sailed on its transparent waters, they saw first of all, on its western side, Capernaum, which, as its name implies, was delightfully situated, between the lake and the hills; lower down to the east Chorazin, and a multitude of smaller places. The celebrated region of Decapolis lay on the eastern side, beyond the hills.

Arrived at Magdala, they quitted their boat, and traced the shore as far as where the Jordan issues from the lake, crossed the river, and being joined by the slaves with the horses and camels, took the road to Tabor, which lies at the end of the plain of Jezreel, over against Carmel. Notwithstanding Helon's impatience, he could not pass so celebrated a mountain without a nearer examination, and Myron willingly came into his plans.

This lofty hill rises out of the middle of the plain, wholly unconnected with any other. Its base is composed of an ash-colored stone, and as the upper part is covered with trees, it has the appearance of a lofty truncated cone. The ascent to the summit is nearly five sabbath-day's journeys, and on the top is a plain of about four in circumference. Wild animals and birds abound on it; and Hosea alludes to

* Josh. xiii. 27; Numb. xxxiv. 11.

the fowling which was carried on here to a great extent.* Barak assembled an army of 100,000 men on Tabor from Zebulon and Naphthali, before he engaged with Sisera;† and indeed a fitter position for a camp can scarcely be imagined. Helon and Myron were astonished at the extent of the view. The snowy peak of Hermon and the dark exhalations of the Dead Sea can both be discerned from it. "And there," exclaimed Helon, transported with delight, "are the towers of Jericho!" The sea of Galilee, the Jordan and the Peræa, spread themselves on the east; on the west the prospect reached to the Mediterranean and to Carmel; near which the Kishon, which rises in Tabor, falls into the sea; a small branch of it discharges itself into the lake of Galilee. Near Tabor, to the northwest, was Nazareth, situated on the slope of a hill and extending into a little valley, shut in on every side. To the south lay Endor, famed in the history of Saul; and near to each other Shunam,‡ the scene of Elisha's miracle, and Jezreel, fifteen sabbath-day's journeys from Samaria, on which was the vineyard of Naboth.§ From this place the whole plain derives the name of Jezreel, or Esdraelon. Further in the distance, a dark shade lowered on the hills of Gilboa. Helon called to mind the lamentation of David for Jonathan and Saul, who had been slain in battle here against the Philistines; and he repeated it to Myron, assuring him that he had never heard a more pathetic elegy.

And David spoke this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son;
"Is the pride of Israel fallen on thy high places?
So are the mighty fallen.
O tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Askelon,
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!
Ye mountains of Gilboa,
No dew, no rain be on your field of slaughter!
For there has the shield of the mighty been thrown away,
The shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

* Hos. v. 1. † Judg. iv. 12. ‡ 2 Kings iv. § 1 Kings xxi.

From the blood of the slain, from the marrow of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
The sword of Saul returned not empty.
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided.
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
Ye daughters of Israel, weep for Saul!
He clothes you no more in purple,
Nor puts ornaments of gold on your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
O! Jonathan, thou wast slain on thine high places;
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan;
Very dear wast thou to me:
Thy love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen!
How are the weapons of war cast away!"

Myron did justice to this pathetic elegy; and they descended Tabor together.

Their journey was now directed to Bethshan or Scythopolis, the place at which the Galilean pilgrims were wont to cross the Jordan, in order to avoid the Samaritans, by keeping on the other side as low down as Bethabara, where they crossed it again. The line from Dor on the Mediterranean to Bethshan formed the boundary between Samaria and Galilee. Galilee contained two hundred larger and smaller towns, some of the latter having as many as 15,000 inhabitants. Agriculture, fishing, and pasturage, the culture of the vine and the olive, all were carried on with success in this country, which is diversified with hills and plains, both of them abounding in water. The inhabitants were characterised by their love of freedom, though both their language and their manners were corrupted by their great intercourse with foreign nations.

They quitted Galilee at Bethshan, and crossing the Jordan pursued their journey along the numerous windings of the stream, which from Bethsaida to the Dead Sea has a course

of seventytwo sabbath-day's journeys. Succoth,* where Jacob built huts, near Mahanaim,† a town on the Jabbok, (so named by him from the vision which was granted to him there) Debir‡ and Bethabara, were hastily passed. At length the Jordan opened into the plain of Jericho; they passed through the city gate and soon reached the hospitable mansion of Selumiel. The gate, with its pious inscriptions,§ opened to receive them; Myron was astonished at the splendor of the house; while Helon thought only that this was his happy home.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE NUPTIALS.

Helon found no one in the front court, and hastily entered the inner court, followed by Myron. The slaves came to tell them, that there was no one in the house.

"Where are they, then?"

"In Helon's house," said the slave with a smile; and informed him that Selumiel, Elisama, Iddo, the wife of Selumiel, Sulamith, and Abisuab with his wife, had gone out a few hours before, in order to receive him in the newly-purchased house. They had justly calculated that he would return this evening.

Helon heard this intelligence with joyful surprise, and easily divined the fact, that out of his affection for Sulamith, who wished not to be separated from her parents, Elisama had purchased a house for him in Jericho; and if not in Jerusalem, where could he be better pleased to dwell than in the City of Palms? The splendid mansion was to be a nuptial present to his beloved nephew. It is true that the

* Gen. xxxiii. 17. † Gen. xxxii. 2. ‡ Josh. xiii. 26. § Deut. xi. 29.

property must return to its owner in the year of Jubilee, and the contract for it was therefore rather a lease than a purchase; but a considerable price had nevertheless been set upon it, which Elisama's wealth enabled him easily to pay.

The slave showed them the way to the house which stood near the opposite gate, so that they had to traverse the whole length of the city. A slave had been waiting for some hours before the gate, and upon a signal given by him to those within, all the males of the company were in waiting to bid him welcome.

"See," said Selumiel, "the rewards of self-denial!"

"Welcome, my brother, and henceforth fellow-citizen of Jericho," said Abisuab.

Helon, with moistened eyes, threw himself into the arms of Elisama. All stood around, pouring out congratulations and blessings.

"What more do we want," said Elisama, "but that thy mother from Alexandria were here?"

Helon looked around with inquiring eye. Selumiel took him by the hand, and led him through to the richly furnished inner-court. Her mother and sister-in-law came with Sulamith from the Armon. After their greetings had been exchanged, Helon at the command of Elisama, as now the master of the house, re-conducted them to their apartments. Bewildered with joy, he could hardly speak. After a short interval they all returned to the house of Selumiel, to the evening meal, and at night Elisama, Helon, and the Greek, returned to the house of Helon, where they henceforth resided. Myron was in astonishment at all he saw, and began to form a very different idea of Israel from that which he had entertained before.

On the following morning Helon arose early, and traversed the house which was to be the scene of his future happiness and duties. No other feeling in life resembles that with which the youth, on the point of emerging into manhood, wanders in solemn musing through the house in which he is to sustain the duties of husband and father. As he explored its courts,

its porticoes, and chambers, by turns he admired the commodious arrangement and tasteful architecture, and the costly furniture, or blessed the generous Elisama; or raised his thoughts in pious gratitude to Jehovah, and implored the continuance of his mercies. He ascended the roof, and looked westward towards the hills of Judah, and eastward to Nebo and Abarim. Entering the Alijah, he consecrated it as the future scene of his devotions by prayer to Jehovah. As he arose from his knees, turning involuntarily towards Jerusalem, he broke out in the words of the psalm:

Unless Jehovah build the house,
They labor in vain that raise it;
Unless Jehovah guard the city,
The watchman waketh but in vain.
In vain ye rise early and sit up late,
And eat the bread of care;
He giveth it to his beloved in sleep.
Lo! children are a heritage from Jehovah,
The fruit of the womb is his reward.
As arrows in the hand of a mighty man,
So are the children of youth:
Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them!
They shall not be ashamed
When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

Psal. cxxvii.

As he turned round, Elisama was behind him at the door, and was wiping the tears from his eyes. "May Jehovah bless thee," said he. "His counsel is wonderful, and he will bring it to pass."

"God grant me," said Helon, "that I may keep his law with a perfect mind."

"May he give thee what thy psalm says," replied Elisama. "Now that thou art a priest and a husband in the promised land, I doubt no longer. Marriage is a divine ordinance, and the divine blessing rests upon it. This I myself experienced, alas, for too short a time! God said, it is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help-meet to be with

him.* And the Preacher says, there is one alone, and not a second ; yea, he hath neither child nor brother, yet is there no end of all his labor, nor is his eye satisfied with riches. For whom do I labor (he should ask himself) and bereave my soul of good ? This also is vanity and a fruitless travail."† Elisama sighed and proceeded, "Two are better than one: they have a good reward for their labor: for if they fall the one will lift up his fellow ; but wo to him that is alone! for when he falleth he hath not another to lift him up. Helon, I *had* once a wife and a child — and I was happy. What have I done that such bliss — ? but I will say no more. The children of my brother are my children ; thou art my son ; and I rejoice in thy happiness as my own. The marriage state is a service of Jehovah, and one of the most effectual means of the fulfilment of his law. By this image he has denoted the relation between himself and the people of his covenant. Remember the conclusion of the book of Proverbs ; and bethink thee what is implied in this, that the great master of wisdom could devise no better termination of his precepts, than the praises of a virtuous wife.

The preparations for the nuptials were speedily made in both houses. The numerous female companions of Sulamith assembled in Selumiel's Armon. The bride, after bathing, was anointed with the choicest perfumes, and her friends brought their gifts, consisting of clothes and costly articles, most of them made by themselves. Her hair was perfumed and braided, her eyebrows deepened with a powder of brilliant black, and her nails colored red. Next, the young maidens, her companions, arrayed her in the nuptial robes, of the finest texture and most brilliant color, which flowed with ample folds to her feet. The girdle was clasped around her waist, the veil hung down from her head, and high above all her other ornaments rose a crown, from which the bride was called *the crowned.*

The evening was come, and stars twinkled on the court,

* Gen. x. 18. † Eccles. iv. 8.

where all was prepared for festivity. Now appeared Helon, anointed and crowned in a similar manner, with the sons of the bride-chamber. They were the young priests and Levites of Jericho, who had been invited for this purpose; and Myron was among them. Each of them, to the number of seventy, bore a staff in his hand, on which was fixed a shallow vessel filled with burning oil and pitch. The festal train was admitted into Selumiel's inner court; the bride and the virgins came forth from the Armon, and the youths and maidens, with aduffes and guitars, sung, in alternate strophes, the praises of the bridegroom and the bride.

Now began the ceremony of conducting the bride to the bridegroom's house. The seventy youths, with their flambeaux, headed the procession; the bride was surrounded by her bride-maidens. Thus Sulamith left her father's house: arrived at the threshold, the feelings which she had struggled to suppress, the mingled emotions of hope and fear, of regret and joy, overpowered her, and she burst into a flood of tears. The mother too wept, pressed her beloved daughter to her breast, and blessing her said, "Be thou the mother of a numerous posterity, like Rachel and like Leah!" Selumiel supported his child in his strong paternal arms, and said, "God, I thank thee that I have lived to see my child happy!"

The sounds of joy were heard from the companions. Sulamith was placed in a litter, and her nurse beside her. All the females were closely veiled; Sulamith in a veil of flame-color. The long train moved through the streets of Jericho. A multitude of persons preceded, carrying the clothes, trinkets, and new furniture of the bride. As each carried only one thing, the procession was very long. Next came the friends of the bridegroom with Helon; then the bride in her litter, accompanied by the virgins. The rest of Helon's friends, male and female servants, and children, closed the train. All the inhabitants of Jericho hastened from their houses, or looked down from their roofs.

Thus at length they reached the house of Helon. The

bride paused at the threshold of the dwelling, in which so much happiness or misery might await her, as if with a timid irresolution. She adorned the door-posts with woollen fillets, and anointed them with oil, and at length the virgins suddenly lifted her over the threshold, the boundary between her past and her future life. The nuptial train entered the courts, and the bride solemnly took possession of the Armon, while the male part of the company remained in the outer apartments, where a splendid feast was served up to them. When all had eaten and were satisfied, males and females assembled in the inner court; the virgins presented the bride, the youths the bridegroom, to Selumiel. In evident agitation, he said, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, who didst create Adam and Eve! Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, who causest Zion to rejoice in her children! Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, who makes the bride and the bridegroom be glad together!" Then taking the right hand of his daughter, he placed it in the right hand of Helon, and pronounced the benediction: "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob be with you, and help you together, and give his blessing richly upon you! Jehovah make the wife that comes into thy house like Rachel and like Leah, who built up the house of Israel!* May thy house be as the house of Malchia, thy fathers' father, and your sons be priests to minister before Jehovah in his temple!"

Selumiel, while he pronounced this blessing, struggled with an emotion which he was unwilling to betray; and Elisama stood near him, giving freer vent to his feelings. The bride sobbed beneath her veil, and Helon was melted into tears.

Kindred and friends now approached the married pair, and bestowed on them their congratulations. The feast ended with the usual ceremonies.

On the following morning the nuptial festivities began afresh, and lasted for seven days,† each distinguished by some new expression of joy. Numerous presents were brought to

*Ruth iv. 11, 12. †Judges xiv. 17, 18; Tob. xi. 19.

the newly married pair by the guests; and others given to them in return. The company exercised their ingenuity in riddles and *maschals;* or a grave and learned rabbi would discourse on the sanctity and duties of the marriage state, and the honor and happiness of those who might thus be appointed to give birth to the Messiah.

This protracted festival was at times wearisome to Sulamith and Helon, who longed to begin their tranquil, solitary, and domestic life. In the mean time, Helon was delighted to discover every day some new perfection in Sulamith, some new resemblance to the maidens and mothers of Israel in times past. Her domestic virtues assimilated her to Sarah; her poetical imagination to Miriam, the sister of Moses; her disinterestedness and self-devotion to the daughter of Jephthah; and her artless piety to Hannah, the mother of Samuel.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE AVENGER OF BLOOD.

It was determined that the young married pair should proceed with Myron, immediately after the marriage, to Alexandria, to fetch Helon's aged mother from Egypt, in time to attend the feast of Tabernacles. Elisama was to remain in the mean time at Jericho, lest, as he observed, he should bring on her the imputation of being a false prophetess. Alas! he little knew what a melancholy accomplishment her prediction was about to receive, and in his own person. The departure was delayed — neither Sulamith nor Helon was impatient for it, and Myron was very willing to remain. Helon found scarcely anything left him to wish. All his expectations of outward prosperity were fulfilled, and he flattered himself that he was as near the summit of spiritual perfection as of

earthly bliss. The deep veneration which Sulamith expressed for his purpose of becoming a Chasidean, regarding him as already being all that he proposed to become, inspired him by degrees with a high opinion of his own righteousness. His present happiness seemed to him a sign of the favor of Jehovah. Accustomed to regard all calamity as a divine judgment for sin, all prosperity as the reward of virtue, he considered his present condition as a mark of the distinguished approbation of God. His conscience seemed to join the league and promote his self-deception; his tenderness for Sulamith, his readiness to make little sacrifices of his wishes to hers, his gratitude and affection towards her parents and his own benefactor Elisama, were magnified by him into a complete obedience to the divine commands, into something more than mere righteousness. As those are apt to do who have experienced hitherto uninterrupted success, he began to think that everything which he undertook must be successful — that his mountain stood strong and should never be moved. He never, alas, thought of inquiring how much youth and good fortune, the sense of pleasure and pride of heart, had to do in the construction of this showy edifice of self-righteousness.

Myron, during the first days of his residence at Jericho, found himself in circumstances so different from what he had expected, that he held it prudent to keep back as much as possible, and become better acquainted with the scene and its personages, before he trusted himself to act upon it. Hence during the festivities of the nuptials, he had been a quiet and unobtrusive spectator, and had recommended himself to the Jewish youths by the easy flexibility of his manners. He had particularly attached himself to Selumiel, after the tumult of rejoicing had subsided, and those who were left together had leisure to seek out the persons who were most congenial to themselves. If he ever offended Elisama, by some expression savoring of heathenism, which now and then seemed to drop from him involuntarily, Selumiel took

his part. He soon discovered Selumiel's partiality for the Essenes, and completely won his heart by telling him, that the Tomuri of Dodona, the Orphici of Thrace, the Curetes in Crete, were either degenerate branches of these Jewish devotees, or had endeavored to form a similar association of wisdom and sobriety, but remained at a much lower point in the scale of perfection. Selumiel took him with him everywhere, even when he went in the evening to the gates of the city, where the men of Jericho assembled to pass the cool hours in conversation. Helon, of whom he stood most in awe, happened to turn the discourse upon the superiority of Israel to the worshippers of Idols, and pointed out the absurdity of the worship of the Egyptians and earlier Samaritans, among whom Apis was revered under the form of a bull; Moloch of a mixed figure, partly man, partly calf; Dagon was represented as having the lower part of a fish; Tartac, as an ass; Nibbaz, as a dog. All expected to see Myron provoked by this attack upon his religion; but to their great astonishment he not only assented to all that Helon had said, but entertained the company, the whole evening, with ludicrous tales of the adventures of the Grecian gods. The grave Orientals were delighted with him, because his manners were diametrically the reverse of their own. While they sat immoveable in the position which they had at once taken, he on his light and nimble feet turned this way and that, alert to seize every opportunity of mirth; ready to converse with those who were disposed for conversation, or to talk alone when others were silent. Amused with his lively sallies, they encouraged him to proceed from one freedom to another, till he thought that everything was allowed to him.

It chanced that a man passed by, loaded with a heavy burthen, and hanging down his head like one conscious of ignominy. He had been detected in frauds a few days before, and as a punishment his beard had been cut off. The finger of scorn was pointed at him by the whole assemblage, and the unfortunate man slunk hastily away. "How strange,"

said Myron, "that you should set so much value on a huge tuft of hair upon your chins, that one who has been deprived of it dares not show himself in your presence; and yet you seldom have taste enough to give it an elegant form! Look for example at Elisama, who thinks so much of his beard; what an unsightly incumbrance it is to him." Encouraged by the laughter which arose from the younger part of the assembly, he approached Elisama, and plucked him by the beard; little aware that to an Oriental, and especially a Jew, such an action was one of the grossest outrages that could be committed — an attack upon the very sanctuary of his personal dignity. Helon sprung to interpose — but it was too late. Elisama arose, with glowing cheeks, and a look in which the expression of the wildest rage grew every moment stronger. His limbs trembled; his features were distorted, his hair stood on end, and his breast heaved with a feverish gasp. "Accursed heathen!" he exclaimed in a fury, "accursed heathen!" he repeated, and drawing his sword, aimed a blow at Myron. The offender, awakened to a consciousness of what he had done, saw the weapon about to fall on him and evaded the stroke; a citizen of Jericho, whom the tumult of the assembly had pushed forward, received it, and fell mortally wounded at Elisama's feet. In silent horror all stood around, and looked by turns on the murderer, the corpse, and the author of the mischief. The whole city hastened to the spot; Myron escaped; and Selumiel, taking the unconscious Elisama by the hand, led him home. Helon, preceding them, burst with a cry of horror into the house, exclaiming, "Wo, wo — homicide — Elisama!" The women hastened from their apartments, and knew not the cause of the confusion. Selumiel entered with Elisama — one in eager haste, the other bewildered with fixed eye and open mouth. "Bring horses, bring camels, bring any beast of burden," exclaimed Selumiel. "Thou hast slain him, Elisama, and must flee before the avenger of blood." "Whither?" asked Helon. "To a city of refuge — to Hebron in Judah — to Bezer in

Reuben — to Ramoth Gilead, best of all." At these words Elisama awoke from his trance. Tears flowed from his aged eyes as he exclaimed, "Merciful God, must I in my old age flee as a murderer, and die by the hands of the avenger?" His voice was choked with sobs.

Two rapid dromedaries, "ships of the desert," were brought. Helon accompanied the unhappy man. It was already night, and they passed unobserved out of Jericho. Without a salutation, or an adieu, they urged their flight, in dread lest the avenger should be on their traces; Elisama with his hair loose, his turban floating on the wind, and death on his countenance.

It was one of the most terrific customs of the East, that the next of kin of any one who had been slain, even unwittingly, was deemed infamous if he did not avenge him, by putting to death the man who had killed him. Moses, unable to eradicate this custom, had mitigated it by the appointment of six cities of refuge, three on each side of the Jordan, in which the unintentional homicide might be safe from the vengeance of the *Goel.** In these cities, and for a thousand yards around, he could not be touched — if he ventured beyond these limits, before the death of the high-priest, the Goel might lawfully kill him. The roads and bridges leading to the city of refuge were to be kept in repair, that the fugitive might not be impeded in his flight. The son of the citizen of Jericho whom Elisama had killed, had been fetched from the field, and had gone forth to avenge his father; but he was too late: Elisama had already reached Ramoth Gilead in safety.

On the following morning a judicial investigation was held. The seven judges took their places in an apartment at the gate, crouching on carpets; beside them sat two Levites; Selumiel, who represented the accused person, stood on the left; the avenger of blood, as the complainant, on the right. Selumiel was clad in mourning and with disordered

* Numb. xxxv.

hair. Behind him were the witnesses whom he had brought with him; and who, before they delivered their testimony, took an oath, and replied Amen, Amen, to the imprecations which the judges laid upon them, if they should not speak the truth. They bore witness that Elisama had harbored no malice against the deceased, and had not intended to smite him, but had been provoked by the insult of a young heathen. The judges did not immediately decide, but on the following morning a second sitting was held, at which they pronounced that Elisama, of Alexandria, had committed an involuntary homicide, and that the privilege of the city of refuge was decreed to him. As he had already taken refuge in Ramoth Gilead, a Levite was sent with a letter to the judges and elders of that place, commending him to their protection.

Selumiel who had remained behind to attend to judicial proceedings, determined to go and see Elisama; and Sulamith could not be dissuaded from accompanying him. Ramoth Gilead lay on the other side of the Jordan, in the country called in ancient time Gilead; a country not so fruitful as this side, from its many mountains and sandy deserts, yet rich in pasturage for cattle, and watered by two considerable streams, the Arnon and the Jabbok; the former empties itself into the Dead Sea, and the latter into the Jordan. The hills of Bashan, Gilead, and Abarim, extending from Antilibanus, send their branches through this country. It was given on the conquest of Canaan to the tribes of Gad and Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh,* as their residence. Ramoth, situated on the Jabbok, was the principal city, celebrated in history by the vow of Jephthah,† and the battle between Ahab and Jehoshaphat and the Syrians.‡

On their arrival they learned that Elisama was dangerously ill. The agitation of mind and fatigue, attending on his flight, had overpowered his feeble frame; he had been attacked by a fever, under which he was hourly sinking. A Levite, who was the physician of Ramoth, and possessed great

* Numb. xxxii. Josh. i. 12. † Judg. xi. 29. ‡ 1 Kings xxii.

knowledge of the human frame and the virtues of plants, had been summoned. Strengthening baths had been employed, and the precious balm of Gilead applied externally and internally. These were the two chief remedies of the Hebrews.* But here they had lost their power ; Elisama fell into a death-like slumber. When he was delirious, the image of Myron seemed to be constantly before his eyes; and he upbraided him with his ingratitude, and warned Helon to beware of him, as it would not be the last of his misdeeds. On the following day his reason returned for some hours, and he spoke calmly and clearly. It was the last revival of the flame of life. He requested Helon to repeat to him the prayer of Moses, the man of God. "Lord thou hast been our refuge in all generations." Ps. xc. He heard it with great attention, and the emotions of his heart were visible, at many passages, in his looks and his clasped hands. He lay for a long time with closed eyes, but his lips were in motion, and it was evident he was addressing himself to God, probably in a penitential psalm ; for once, when his voice grew stronger, he was heard to say,

My days pass away as a shadow,
And I wither as grass;
But thou, Jehovah, shalt endure for ever,
And thy name remaineth from generation to generation ;
Thou wilt arise and have mercy on Zion,
For the time is come that thou shouldest favor her,
The appointed hour is come.

His voice again became faint, and it was after some interval that he was heard to say—

He weakeneth my strength in the way,
He shorteneth my days.

And then with a firmer tone—

The children of thy servants shall continue,
And their seed shall prosper before thee.—Ps. cii.

* Jer. viii. 22. xlvi. 11.

He turned with an expression of the deepest affection to Helon, and said, "Greet thy mother from me — when the high-priest dies, carry my bones to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and lay them beside thy father's — wait on the Lord, and thou shalt obtain" — his words became inaudible. Helon held his cold hand, and bathed it with his tears; and all who stood around his bed in mournful silence, thought him already dead. But the dying eye opened once more,—gazed around on them all — then fixed itself on heaven. His head sunk back in Sulamith's arms. Twice the mouth was distorted in the bitterness of pain — then once again. The body became rigid — respiration ceased.

After a solemn pause, each reading in the countenance of the rest the confirmation of his fears, all uttered at the same moment a piercing shriek of grief. The men rent their upper garments, beat their breasts, threw their turbans on the ground, strewed dust and ashes on their head, put on sackcloth, covered their chins, and went barefoot. Helon was hurried away, lest, being a priest, he should contract pollution from the dead body.* The eyes of the corpse were closed, and it was carried into the Alijah by the nearest relatives. As it had been the custom in Judea, since the captivity, to bury very soon, the night was passed in making preparations. The body was wrapped in a large sheet, the head bound with a napkin, and then the whole from head to foot swathed with a broad bandage, and each foot, each hand, each finger separately. At midnight came the Levites with their musical instruments: the female mourners began their office by lifting up their voices and lamenting, strewing ashes on their heads and singing a dirge. On the following morning the house was filled with neighbors and friends, expressing their sympathy. Sulamith ran about weeping and wringing her hands above her head. The men sat in another apartment upon the ground and mourned in silence. Sulamith was conducted to the apartment of the women, where she placed

* Numb. xix. 14.

herself on a carpet in the middle, and the rest of the females of the family sat round her. The hired mourners formed a wide circle at a little distance. Each of the women held a handkerchief in her hand by two of the corners. The mourners, who knew a variety of funeral songs, began one which expressed the virtue, and calamities of the deceased. Sulamith gave them a sign and they ceased; and all the females of the family began to weep along with her. They arose, twisted their handkerchiefs together, and ran shrieking round the room, while Sulamith, sitting motionless in the middle, wrung her hands and tore her beautiful dark hair. When she ceased, the mourners resumed their song, till she again gave them a signal, the relatives renewed their lamentations. This lasted till towards evening, when the inhabitants assembled at the door, and the corpse was carried to the grave. Those who carried the bier proceeded with such hasty steps that they seemed rather to run than walk — an usage which was said to bear this meaning, — that death is the most terrible punishment of sin. Every one who met the procession joined the mourners, and bore a part in the cries of the women.

Before the gate of the city, in a garden planted with trees, stood the sepulchre of Elisama's host, hewn out of the rock; and in this the corpse was deposited; for burning was deemed dishonorable by the Jews, and regarded with abhorrence. The bearers threw aloes, myrrh, and other fragrant substances, upon the body, so as to cover it, and the sepulchre was closed with a stone, which was annually whitened with lime. The friends and relatives having remained standing awhile before the closed sepulchre, bowed themselves thrice to the earth and prayed; then taking up a sod threw it behind them, and said, "Remember, O man, that dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return." The procession returned with a repetition of the funeral lamentations.

On reaching home they washed their hands, and the neighbors brought them the bread of mourning; a beautiful and

humane custom in Israel! No victuals were prepared in the house which death had visited, but the neighbors and friends came with delicate viands and invited the mourners to partake of them, to recruit their strength and spirits. This was called *the bread of mourning;* and the cup which was handed round, *the cup of consolation.* The mourning lasted seven days, during which it was held indecorous to wash the garments, to bathe or anoint the body, or to wear the sandals or the turban. Every day Sulamith went with the women of the family to lament, at the tomb of the deceased, his true affection and his calamitous fate. When the days of mourning were ended, suitable presents were made to the friendly host, and Helon, Sulamith, and Selumiel returned from the Peræa over the Jordan to Jericho. The bones of Elisama were to repose in the precincts of Ramoth Gilead till the death of the high-priest, when they should be transferred to the valley of Jehoshaphat, to rest there till the joyful morning of the resurrection.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE WATER OF JEALOUSY.

In the mean time the joyous season of the vintage, and the gathering of the olives and the fruit began. With shouts of joy they climbed the lofty palms, of which the plain of Jericho was full, and gathered the dates, which grew in large bunches of fifteen to twenty pounds in weight. They were afterwards divided according to their different degrees of ripeness; some were eaten fresh, others were pressed to obtain from them the celebrated palm-wine. This was done amidst festive shouts, and the praises of the tree were celebrated, of which every part is applicable to some use of man.

From the terebinths, some of which had seen the lapse of centuries and were still vigorous and verdant, they plucked the red and fragrant berries, or climed the pistachio to bring down its delicious nuts, or stored up the resin which spontaneously exudes from both these trees. The figs and the pomegranates were gathered, the balsam scraped from the weeping tree, or expressed from its seeds. Later in the season the olive trees, some of which yielded a thousand pounds of oil, were stripped of their yet unripe berries, which were gently pressed that the virgin oil might run from them; or crushed in the press that they might furnish oil for the necessary purposes of food and anointing. Even the vintage was beginning here and there.

One morning Helon was walking with Sulamith and Abisuab through a vineyard and seeking the ripe bunches among the loaded trees. His mind was more cheerful and more composed than it ever had been since the death of Elisama. A slave of Selumiel came hastily to him and summoned him to the house, saying, that a messenger from Gaza had arrived with letters that required a speedy answer. He had brought letters from Myron addressed to Selumiel and to Helon.

On the unfortunate evening when the homicide of Elisama had occurred, Myron had hastily taken the road to Gaza designing as speedily as possible to return to Alexandria. With all his levity he joined a great deal of good nature, and when he reflected on his conduct, his conscience found much to reproach him. He was compelled to wait at Gaza for an opportunity of conveyance to Egypt, and during his stay the news of what had happened in Jericho, soon followed by that of Elisama's death, was made public there, and excited a very general feeling against him, both among Jews and heathen. The first effect was to make him wish for a speedy departure — but then again the thought of his conduct towards the friend of his youth smote him to the heart, and he could not go, till he had sought his forgiveness. Thus he

allowed several opportunities of making the journey in company to pass by, and yet he could not summon courage to go to Jericho. At length he resolved on the following plan. He came to a place in the neighborhood of that city, and thence despatched a messenger to Selumiel, to whom he testified his sincere sorrow for what he had done, and earnestly requested his good offices in reconciling him to Helon. To him also he wrote a letter, which he entreated Selumiel to deliver to him.

Selumiel was much affected on reading the letter; he sent for Helon and gave him that which was destined for him. It was with difficulty that he could be prevailed on to receive it. Myron reminded him of their youthful friendship, and earnestly supplicated for an interview.

"That," said Selumiel, "would be an act of heroism well worthy of an Israelite."

"The heathen are threatened with Jehovah's curse," said Helon, "and we reap nothing but misery from their friendship. I will not see him."

"Did not Solomon pray even for the heathen,"* said Selumiel; "and will not the Messiah be the light of the heathen? Thou must not be implacable, if thou wishest to fulfil the law of the fathers. Was not Joseph reconciled to his brethren? did not David show mercy to Saul his enemy? did not Jehovah himself on Sinai command, 'If thou seest the ox or the ass of thine enemy going astray thou shalt lead him back;' and is not a heathen of more estimation than an ox or an ass?"

"Forgive Myron," said Sulamith, fondly laying her head on his bosom, "forgive him, priest of Jehovah! Leave vengeance to him who hath declared that he will repay; and think what joy thou wouldst feel, if through thy means he become a proselyte of the gate."

Helon's former spirit revived, and he resolved that he would perform the heroic act to which he was called. The

* 1 Kings viii. 41.

messenger was sent back to Myron, with permission to him to return. He soon made his appearance; for he had wandered near the confines of the city while uncertain of the issue of his embassy. He fell before the feet of his injured friend, clasped his knees, and supplicated forgiveness, with all the force of Grecian eloquence and emotion of sincere penitence and sorrow. Their reconciliation was soon accomplished. Sulamith had the delight of seeing her husband restored to the same peace and joy as in the first happy days of their union.

Myron was received again into the house, and, in the freedom of their renewed confidence, Helon informed him how much he was indebted for his return to the good offices of Sulamith. Myron, as the remembrance of the mischief which he had done began to be obliterated from his volatile mind, resumed his gaiety, and with it the hasty thoughtlessness which was his characteristic.

Helon had gone one day to the gate of the city alone; for Myron had never since his return accompanied him thither. It suddenly occurred to him that he had never duly expressed his gratitude to Sulamith, for her mediation in his favor, and he went straightway to the Armon, in the warmth of his feeling, without reflecting on what he was doing.

The citizens of Jericho, who sat in the gate, saw in the mean time that red mist gathering in the northwest, which is the usual prognostic of the approach of the pernicious wind of the east. This wind is felt in all its pestilential fury in the desert, where it sweeps over the surface, often to the height of a foot, destroying everything which it encounters. It is there called the simoom. In Palestine its effects are not destructive to life, but in the highest degree oppressive and disagreeable. All the citizens of Jericho rose hastily from the gate, and hastened to their homes.

Helon, on his arrival at his home, went immediately to the Armon, to warn Sulamith of the approach of the simoom. At the door he met Myron, whose visit Sulamith had not

received, but had warned him instantly to withdraw, if he would not bring ruin on himself and her.

Helon started with surprise and horror when he saw Myron in his Armon, which no foot of male, save his own, had ever trodden before. Wild jealousy and furious anger took possession of his mind, and agitated his whole frame. "Vile heathen," he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, "is this thy return for my hospitality and friendship? Was it not enough that thou didst murder Elisama?"

Myron's protestations of his innocence were unheard or unheeded in the whirlwind of Helon's rage. His cries soon brought together the slaves of the house. Seizing Myron by the arm, he fiercely thrust him towards them, and they, laying hold of him, drove him with blows and curses from the house. Sulamith had hastened from the Armon, and endeavored to calm her husband; but at the sight of her his fury burst forth more violently than ever, and thrusting her back into the Armon, he ran like one frantic through the streets of Jericho to find Selumiel, to whom he related what had happened. They returned together, Selumiel's indignation scarcely less fierce than his own. Selumiel on entering went immediately to his daughter, and laying hold of her exclaimed, "Monster! am I then the father of an adulteress? Didst thou learn from thy mother or from me to break thy marriage vow with a godless heathen?" She had been sitting sobbing and in tears, her face hidden in the veil with which she had wrapped her head. At these words, however, uncovering herself and looking up at her father, she said with a firm voice, "I am innocent."

Helon and Selumiel were yet more provoked by this assurance. "If thou art innocent," said Selumiel, "thou shalt drink the water of jealousy. I will know that my daughter is pure, or if not, may all that the law has denounced against the adulteress light upon thee!" With these words he went forth to call the elders together, and Helon shut himself up in the Alijah. All the happiness of his life was fled; he

wept, he complained, he inveighed against the heathen, against Sulamith, against himself. In the agony of his grief he threw himself on the ground, rent his clothes, and tore his hair. Then again he sat in fixed and moping silence, or opened his lips only to recite passages of Scripture, which describe the harlot and the adulteress. "Yes," he exclaimed, "the Essenes are right; it is because they know the inconstancy of women that they have excluded them from their society. Unhappy Israel, what shall become of thee, when thy matrons are corrupt and thy wives give themselves up to folly! No wonder that the once holy people is fallen even below the heathen themselves."

A moment after, reflecting on what he had said aloud, he started with terror as from a frightful dream. "Can that be Sulamith?" he said with a sigh. The image of his wife, in all her gentleness and loveliness, stood before his mind, and softened, he exclaimed, "Is it possible?" Had Sulamith at that moment spoken but a word to him, he would have forgiven her all. Helon even quitted the Alijah to go to her: but when he looked down on the door of the Armon, and the thought flashed on him that through it the man had passed by whom he had been dishonored, every returning thought of love and compassion was banished from his mind.

The inferior court, which was held on the spot where the offence was alleged to have been committed, assembled in this instance on the following morning at the gate of the city; Selumiel, appearing as accuser of his own daughter, stood on the right of the judges, and Sulamith on their left. The whole gate was filled with citizens of Jericho, among whom the news of this affair had rapidly spread, and excited universal curiosity.

Sulamith felt, at her first entrance, overpowered by the solemnity of this venerable assemblage, of which she had heard so much, but which she had never seen; that feeling having subsided, she regained her self-possession. Helon stood with a bewildered countenance, not venturing to look

at his wife, or he must have read her vindication in her countenance, in which the pride of conscious innocence struggled with the feeling of ignominious exposure, and in her bright eyes now red with weeping, but untroubled by any expression of guilt or fear.

The father related what had happened, and Helon confirmed his statement. The judges turned to Sulamith, and asked her if she acknowledged the truth of what was alleged against her. "I call Jehovah to witness," she replied with lofty tranquillity of manner, "that I am innocent, and will take the oath of purgation." "Be it unto thee," said the elder, "as thou hast desired." Two assessors were selected to accompany her to the Sanhedrim, before whom alone the oath could be taken, to protect her on the way from the fury of the men, and to lay the whole affair before the supreme council.

They departed from Jericho immediately. The whole city was assembled, men, women and children. Sulamith's mother stood among the crowd wringing her hands. Most of the females sympathized with their suffering sister; but the whispers of malice and the taunts of malignant joy were also heard.

Helon followed them at a distance, by the same road by which at Pentecost he had gone up to Jerusalem an affianced bridegroom, full of joy and hope. Then the desert had seemed to be converted into a paradise. How was his condition changed! Elisama was dead, the land of promise had proved a land of chastisement to him; his enthusiasm for the sacerdotal office was dead within him; his wife went before him as an adulteress. With what regret did he look towards the distant Oasis of the Essenes, and long to bury himself in it, without a wife, without the priesthood, a stranger in the land of promise, solitary and single among the people of Israel!

They arrived in the evening at Jerusalem. Iddo was sitting at the gate, but when he saw them, and discovered

the purpose for which they were come, he fled with averted head, and hands stretched out as if to repel some threatening evil. They ascended the temple-hill; all who met them were astonished to see her, who at the feast had been the object of universal admiration, brought up as a transgressor. She was confined for the night in a chamber of the temple; and Helon and Selumiel passed it in dejection and gloom in the house of Iddo.

The morning, the fearful morning came! After the usual sacrifice, the Sanhedrim assembled in the hall Gazith. All its seventyone members were present, the high-priest, the elders, and the Levites sitting in a semicircle. Sulamith was led through the multitude that filled the courts, and placed before the tribunal. The assessors of the court of Jericho then laid the matter before the Sanhedrim, and Selumiel and Helon confirmed their statement. The father and husband were commanded to withdraw, and Sulamith, in her mourning garments, remained standing alone, in the midst of the judges.

They addressed her at first in a friendly tone, and endeavored to bring her to confession, alleging grounds of excuse from her youth and her husband's own culpability. "Daughter," said one of the Sanhedrim, "glorify the great name of God, and do not allow that this sacred name should be washed with water and blotted out." At other times they assumed an angry tone, blamed her silence, which they interpreted as an evidence of guilt, and bade her beware that she did not by her obstinacy plunge herself into an untimely death. Sulamith adhered to her denial, and, as they often urged her to confession, replied, "I am innocent and falsely accused. Put me to what test ye will, but ask of me no other confession than this, that I am innocent."

The Sanhedrim, convinced by her noble firmness, ceased to importune her, and decreed that she should drink the water of jealousy, and take the oath of purgation. "Daughter," said one of them, "if thou art innocent, put thy trust

in Jehovah and drink boldly. It is with the bitter water as with poison, which laid upon a wounded part produces death, but has no effect when the flesh is sound."

She was led from the hall Gazith to the gate of Nicanor, not however by the direct road, but by a long circuit, that she might still have time to reflect and to confess. The crowd formed a lane through which she had to pass, not only exposed to their gaze, but plucked scornfully by the arms, enduring their taunts and blows. Only here and there some one of more generous disposition, struck with her free and noble carriage, exclaimed, "The water of jealousy cannot injure thee; thou mayest drink it without fear." At length they reached the gate of Nicanor opposite to the sanctuary, and the priest, who had been appointed for the purpose, began the appalling ceremonies of the oath of purgation. Laying hold of her garments, he rent them from the top of the neck to the breast with expressions of horror, tore the veil from her head, and threw her turban on the ground. He dishevelled her braided hair and let it float upon the wind, and then turning his face from her, said, "Thou hast forsaken the manner of the daughters of Israel, who cover their heads, and hast followed the manners of the heathen, who go with their heads uncovered."

The men spat on the ground before her; the women uttered cries of abhorrence, and a deep murmur of wo! wo! ran from rank to rank among the people, which even the unconcerned spectator could not hear without shuddering. Helon stood with averted head, and stupified with horror. Selumiel wept aloud.

The priest threw all the rest of Sulamith's ornaments, her necklace, ear-rings, and bracelets, to the ground, and girded her rent garments over her bosom with a strip of bark. The more ignominious the outrages to which she was subject, the more striking appeared the contrast of her dignified air and demeanor. The husband was compelled to reach to the priest the offering of jealousy, consisting of a tenth

part of an ephah of meal, in a basket of osier. The meal was of barley, the meanest grain, neither oil nor incense was mingled with it. Helon could not bear to look, but reached it to the priest with averted head, lest his eyes should encounter those of Sulamith.

The priest took an earthen vessel that had never been used, filled it with water from the laver beside the altar of burnt-offering, and carrying it into the holy place put into it some of the dust of the floor. When he returned, he exhorted her once more to reflect what she was about to do, and if she were guilty not to drink, but to confess her sin. The accused replied distinctly and firmly, "I am innocent." Again the deep murmur of wo! wo! spread along the shuddering multitude, who thronged the temple courts.

The priest then with an elevated and solemn voice said, "If thou art innocent, and hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another, instead of thy husband, be thou free from the curse of this bitter water, and let it not harm thee. But if thou hast gone aside to another and hast been defiled, then may Jehovah make thee a curse among thy people, and bring on thee all the curses which are written in his law."*

Sulamith, thus adjured, answered firmly, supported by the power of God, Amen, Amen. And the murmur of wo! wo! rolled deeper and more awfully along the ranks of men and women.

The priest now wrote the curses on a roll. Helon took the barley meal from the basket, placed it in a sacred vessel, and gave it into his wife's hands. Her look met his and pierced him to the heart, and roused from the stupor in which he had been sunk during the preceding part of the ceremonial, he made his way through the people, and rushed down from the temple-hill. A pause of a few moments ensued, and then the priest, laying his hand under the hand of Sulamith, waved the offering of jealousy in the customary

* Numb. v. 19.

form before Jehovah, then took it from her, carried it to the altar of burnt-offering, and, ascending it, mixed the meal with salt, and burnt it in the fire. He then descended again to the gate of Nicanor, took the roll, and washed the writing with the water in which the dust of the sanctuary had been mixed. The assembled crowd stood in deep and breathless attention. The priest reached to Sulamith the vessel which contained the water of cursing: she took it, lifted her eyes towards the holy of holies, and drank it off. There was a stillness as of death amongst all who stood around, as if they were conscious of the presence of Jehovah, to clear the innocent or punish the guilty.

Sulamith stood in the midst of the people, firm, and with her looks fixed on the holy of holies; all eyes were directed towards her, and watched what would be the effect of the draught. But when they saw that she was unharmed by it, and that God had justified her from the accusations of her enemies, they burst into a cry of joy, and Hallelujah resounded from the temple to the city. Selumiel rushed to his daughter, and folded her in his paternal arms. With shouts of triumph and exclamations, "Blessed be Jehovah, she is innocent!" they accompanied her into the inner court of the temple, where the priest formally pronounced her acquittal. Thronging around her, all offered her their congratulations. Her hair was braided anew, her turban, her veil, her jewels were restored to her, and the dark garments of mourning exchanged for festal attire. Sulamith descended from the temple with modest and downcast looks. Iddo, who had heard the shouts of joy and had rightly interpreted them, opened his gates and received her. The people who had accompanied her remained long assembled on the open place before the Water-gate.

But where is Helon? When he had fled from the temple, overpowered by the look of Sulamith, he wandered about, shunned as one frantic by all who observed him, and unconscious whither he was going till his feet carried him to the

grave of his father in the valley of Jehoshaphat, where exhausted by fatigue and strong excitement, he fell before the sepulchre and remained long insensible. Longer might he have remained, but that he was roused from his stupor by voices which cried, He is here, he is here! He opened his eyes and saw Iddo, who had come out with several others to seek him. Iddo embraced him, repeating to him, She lives, she is guiltless! while Helon, like one awaking from a dream, scarcely understood the meaning or the reference of the words. When fully restored to the consciousness of what had passed, joy, remorse and shame rushed in such a torrent upon his mind, that he would have fallen again to the earth if they had not supported him. In this state they led him home.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

Sulamith was waiting for her husband at the door, surrounded by her friends. As he entered she threw herself at his feet, and implored his forgiveness for the uneasiness which she had caused him. He raised her up, and then throwing himself on his face before her, implored her forgiveness with a look which penetrated her soul. To ask pardon in words was beyond his power. The friends conducted them to the inner court. Sulamith placed herself beside Helon, and endeavored to tranquillize him, but he sat with eyes fixed upon the ground. He could scarcely even rejoice in the acquittal of his wife, so bitter was the remembrance that it was by him she had been unjustly accused. For the first time in his life he despised himself. It was in vain that Iddo advised him to efface the remembrance of what was past, and enjoy the present good; there was too much of Sadducean levity

in this exhortation to pass instantaneously from sorrow to joy, to suit a mind so deeply agitated as Helon's. Equally unavailing was the advice of Selumiel, to regard it all as the result of inevitable destiny, and to resign himself to it as the will of Jehovah. To reach the sublimity of this Essene philosophy required a more buoyant spirit than his who was so oppressed by the sense of his own unworthy conduct.

Thus the day passed on. At evening the feast of the commencement of the civil year was announced by the sound of trumpets. It was the new moon of the seventh month, or Tisri, and was called the feast of Trumpets, because from morning to evening trumpets of rams' horns were blown in the temple, according to the command of Moses.* "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets." Helon resolved to pass this day and the succeeding eight days of penitence, before the great day of Atonement, which fell on the tenth of the month Tisri, with the old man in the temple. While he remained with Sulamith, he was so painfully reminded of the injury which he had done her, that he could have no hope of consolation or tranquillity.

As soon as the gates were opened he went up to the temple, and as he crossed the court of the Gentiles, the old man was coming from his chamber. He went up to him and bade him welcome. "I purpose," said Helon, "to spend the next ten days in the courts of Jehovah and to present a sin-offering." "Come then to my chamber," said the old man, "and remain there." He returned thither, and Helon followed him. "Elisama," said Helon, "is dead at Ramoth Gilead, whither he had fled from the avenger of blood."

"I know it," replied the old man.

"I have accused my wife unjustly, and made her unhappy." "I was present yesterday, and saw how nobly she vindicated her innocence by the water of jealousy," the old man replied.

* Lev. xxiii. 23.

"Alas, I am no Chasidean," said Helon mournfully, "and never shall be one!" "It is true," said the old man; "but you should be more than a Chasidean."

"All on earth is vanity and deception — happiness, hope, and love — all is deception," exclaimed the youth. "And the greatest deception of all is that which as yet thou dost not suspect," rejoined the old man. "Remain here till thou art purified. I go to the sacrifice, for this day shall no work be done, but offerings be offered to the Lord."*

Helon remained in the old man's chamber. As every festival was first consecrated generally by the customary sacrifice, afterwards specially by its own, the morning-sacrifice was first presented. Next came the sacrifice of the new moon, two young bullocks, a ram, seven lambs of the first year as a burnt-offering, with their appropriate meat and drink offering, and a young goat as a sin-offering. Last of all the special offering of the seventh new moon was sacrificed, a young bullock, a ram, and seven lambs of the first year, with meal and wine, and a goat as a sin-offering.† The law was afterwards read and explained in the synagogue.

Helon heard in his cell the blowing of the trumpets and the song of the people; and in his solitude repeated after them the eightyfirst psalm, which they were singing.

After the evening-sacrifice the old man questioned him respecting the state of his mind. Helon laid open his whole heart to him with filial simplicity and unreservedness, and as he spoke he could have fancied that Elisama, returned to life, was sitting before him. "Once only in my life," said he, "have I been happy, when I quitted Egypt and entered the promised land, and kept the Passover in the temple of Jehovah. I was then happy in sanguine anticipation. But I soon discovered imperfections where I had thought everything faultless; I found the truth, the melancholy truth of the account which thou hadst given me of the priests. I thought

* Lev. xxiii. 25. † Numb. xxix. 1—3.

to find a sanctuary of pure happiness and virtue in my own house. Jehovah bestowed on me a virtuous wife, but I proved myself unworthy of her. Elisama died under the imputation of homicide, and we all were guilty of injustice towards the excellent Sulamith. Thou art right; Israel is a disobedient, sinful people. I condemn others freely, because I include myself in the same condemnation. Jehovah has given us his law, and the only fruit of it is that we are more criminal than the heathen who live without a law. O that I had lived in Solomon's or David's days! In our present condition it cannot be fulfilled. What God has enabled thee to do is a miracle, as all the people regard it."

The old man heard him calmly as he uttered all this and much more, and then in a grave and serious tone began. "Thou talkest like a young man, hastily and ignorantly, and in all that thou hast said scarcely anything is true, except the sinfulness of Israel. We are disobedient, as thou hast described us, thou and I, and the whole people; in the days of Solomon and David it was no better; and hadst thou lived in those times thou wouldst have been as far as thou art now from the fulfilment of the law. The law was given us to convince us of our sins, not to serve as the basis on which our pride might build its towering edifice. When it has convinced us of our sin, it awakens also our longing for help and consolation. It is the lot, or rather the privilege, of Israel, that it alone has the consciousness of sins, and the hope of a certain atonement for them. If both are united in thee, if thou mournest truly for thy sins, and truly desirest reconciliation, do what thou hast purposed and offer thy sin-offering; afterwards we will discourse further."

Helon purchased a goat for a sin-offering; this was the victim which a ruler and a priest was to present; the high-priest, on the other hand, a bullock; and a common Israelite, a sheep.* He carried it through the gate on the northern

*Lev. iv.

side of the altar of burnt-offering ; standing behind it he laid his hands on the head of the animal between the horns, and said, confessing his sins, "O Jehovah, I have transgressed against thee! forgive my transgression and my sin which I have committed." Then he slew the goat; a priest received the blood in a basin and carried it to the altar of burnt-offering, dipped his finger in it, and touched the four horns of the altar, letting a few drops trickle down each of them. He then ascended it, and poured the remainder of the blood down the pipe. Helon took off the skin of the victim and taking the internal fat gave it to the priest, who waved it with the liver and the kidneys between the altar and the temple salted it, and burnt it on the altar. The rest of the flesh belonged to the officiating priest. Helon had offered this sacrifice, in expectation that his conscience would be tranquillized by it ; but he did not experience the result which he had promised himself. He found himself as full of sorrow and fear after the offering as before. He complained to the old man, that he had desired to walk in the way of the Lord, and had offered a sacrifice in pursuance of it, but found no blessing follow it.

"Has not David said," replied the old man, "even he who so delighted in the service of the sanctuary,"

> Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it,
> Thou delightest not in burnt-offering.
> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
> A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
>
> Ps. li. 16.

"I would," said Helon, "that my whole heart belonged to Jehovah, then should I have peace and joy. But how may I attain this state?"

"Tell me," said the old man, "when, as a priest, would you declare the leper cleansed from his leprosy?"

"When no spot of leprosy remains in him from head to foot," said Helon, "but all is sound, as far as the priest can

see." "So judge then of the sinfulness of your whole state, from a single sin. Read the penitential psalms, and tell me what you find in them most applicable to your own condition." Helon obeyed his injunction, but for several days the old man came and went without noticing him. One evening, however, when he returned from the sacrifice, and was about to withdraw again, Helon earnestly entreated him to stay. "I have found," said he, "the words which too truly describe my own condition,

> There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger,
> Nor any health in my bones because of my sins;
> For mine iniquities rise above my head;
> They weigh me down as a heavy burden.—Ps. xxxiii. 3, 4.

"What a new light has opened upon me from these words! in what a condition do I now appear to myself! How did I deceive myself when I supposed that, a learner as I was, I had already attained the rank of a Chasidean! What miserable self-deception was I practising, when I professed to renounce those things to which my heart so strongly clung! What contemptible pride, to imagine that I could reach the summit of perfection by ascending, step by step, from the fulfilment of one commandment to that of another! And when one frail support of my self-conceit gave way, how eagerly did I catch at another, to prop myself up. I must confess with Cain, 'My sins are too great to be forgiven,' and I tremble at the words of the children of Korah, 'No man can by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him.'* I am under the curse pronounced from Sinai, 'Cursed be he that fulfils not all the words of this law to do them.'" "Praised be Jehovah," said the old man, "that thou hast at length discerned one part of the eternal truth; the other will not be withheld from thee in due season. Israel is a people mourning for sin, but also hoping for forgiveness. If our sins separate between God and us, we have the more

* Ps. xlix. 7.

need of a mediator. The Messiah comes who shall also remove our sins.* Say not therefore 'My sins are too great to be forgiven.' Thou knowest that the mercy of Jehovah is like his nature, infinite. Pray then for faith, and even now thy offering on his altar shall reconcile thee, by virtue of the future sacrifice of the Messiah. Thou hast partaken of the sin of thy people, partake also with them in the atonement which is to be made on the morrow."

On the following day Helon was early in the temple. The high-priest had been already seven days there, preparing himself for the great solemnity of atonement on the tenth day of Tisri, and along with him his substitute, who was to fill his place, if any accidental impurity should disqualify the high-priest. The solemnity began in the evening. It was the greatest fast in the year, lasting twentyfour hours, from evening to evening. The people assembled in the temple as soon as it was light. The high-priest had watched all night and had bathed himself in the morning. He was on this occasion the representative of the whole people before Jehovah, and performed those services at the altar which were usually the office of the priests. He offered the morning-sacrifice and the meat-offering for himself as high-priest. Having again bathed himself, he put on his under robe of byssus, his drawers, his upper garments, and his girdle and turban. Once more he washed his hands and feet, and then offered a bullock for a sin-offering for himself and his house, and a goat for the sins of the people, at the door of the sanctuary.

He laid his hand behind on the head of the bullock, and said, "O Jehovah, I have sinned against thee, both I and my house! Forgive my sins wherewith I have sinned against thee, I and my house, as it is written, 'On this day is your atonement made, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before Jehovah.' "† Thrice he uttered the name

* Dan. ix. 24. † Lev. xvi. 30.

of Jehovah in this confession, and thrice all the priests, the Levites, and the whole people, fell on their faces and said, "Praised be the holy name of his kingdom for ever and ever!"

From the bullock he went to the two goats on the north side of the altar, and placing himself between them, shook a box in which were two small tablets, one inscribed "For Jehovah," the other "For Azazel." He drew a lot for each, and placed it on the head of the goat for which he had drawn. When he drew that which was for Jehovah, he said aloud "For Jehovah;" and all the priests, the Levites, and the people, fell upon their faces to the earth. The goat Azazel was then taken to the gate of Nicanor. The high-priest returned to the bullock, made a new confession over it for the sins of himself and his house, and the sons of Aaron, then slew it, and another priest received the blood in a basin. The high-priest took coals from the altar of burnt-offering, and laying incense upon it, went through the holy into the most holy place, to burn incense before Jehovah. He returned into the court, keeping his face towards the holy of holies, and then taking the blood, carried it as he had done the incense, and dipping his finger in it, sprinkled it once in the air, and seven times on the ground towards the place where in the former temple the ark of the covenant had stood.

When he returned into the court, the goat for Jehovah was brought to him. He slew it, carried the blood into the holy of holies for the sins of himself, his house, and the sons of Aaron, as well as of the whole people, and sprinkled it as before. Retiring from the most holy into the holy place, he sprinkled the veil which was between them seven times; first with the blood of the bullock, and then with that of the goat. Then mingling their blood, he dipped his finger in it and let a few drops trickle down the horns of the altar of incense. He cleared the altar from ashes, and sprinkled the place seven times with blood. The remainder of the blood he poured out at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering.

The high-priest went next to the goat Azazel, laid his hands upon his head, and confessed over him the sins of the people, as he had before confessed those of himself and his house. As often as the name of Jehovah recurred, the people fell on their faces and said, "Praised be the holy name of his kingdom for ever and ever!" The goat was then carried by an Israelite into the wilderness and set at liberty, that he might bear away the sins of the people.

The high-priest then took the skin and inward parts of the goat which was for Jehovah, with the rest of the body, and sent it to be burnt outside the city. The men who performed this office, as well as he who carried the scape-goat to the wilderness, were unclean the rest of the day.

These ceremonies made a deep impression upon Helon. He followed the high-priest into the court of the Women, where he read the portion of the law, respecting the day of atonement.* The high-priest then bathed himself, laid aside his garments of byssus, and put on his pontifical array, his meil, his ephod, his breastplate, and his turban with the name of Jehovah. In these garments, he approached the altar and offered a ram as a burnt-offering for himself, and another for the people; with seven lambs of the first year, and the fat of the sin-offering for himself and the people. The people remained fasting in the temple; the hearing the law was the principal occupation between the sacrifices. The fast continued from evening to evening.

When evening came the high-priest offered, before the usual sacrifice, a bullock for a burnt-offering and a goat for a sin-offering. After the evening-sacrifice, he bathed himself, washed his hands and feet, changed his pontifical robes for his garments of byssus, went again into the holy of holies and brought out the censer. This was the fourth time that he entered it on this day, the only day, in the year when he appeared before the ark of the covenant. Having bathed

* Lev. xxiii. 26.

again and put on his pontifical array, he burnt incense in the holy place and lighted the lamps, concluding by giving his benediction to the people, who prostrated themselves while they received it. Helon had felt during the solemnities of this day the weight removed from his mind which had so long pressed upon it. He prayed in the words of the Psalmist:

Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile.
When I kept silence my bones waxed old
Through my groaning all the day long.
For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me;
My moisture was turned into the drought of summer;
Yet I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and my iniquity I did not conceal.
I said, I confess my transgressions unto Jehovah;
Thou forgavest the burthen of my sin.
For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee
While mercy may yet be found;
The floods of mighty waters shall not come nigh unto him.
Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble;
Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.
Many sorrows shall be to the wicked:
But he that trusteth in Jehovah shall be surrounded with mercy.
Be glad in Jehovah, and rejoice, ye righteous;
And shout for joy, all ye upright in heart.—Ps. xxxii.

At evening he returned to the cell of the old man. A calm peace had overspread his mind, to which he had long been a stranger. He no longer prided himself in his imaginary self-righteousness, but he felt the satisfactory assurance that his "transgression was forgiven, that his iniquity was pardoned;" and in the midst of his gratitude to Jehovah, he did not forget the filial effusion of thankfulness towards the venerable man, whose counsels had taught him how to seek rest to his soul.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

The Feast of Trumpets, on the first day of the month Tisri, had been the beginning of a series of solemnities crowned by the Feast of Tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth and lasted till the twentysecond day. While some of the people of Israel were gathering in the latest gifts of the earth, and others preparing for the pilgrimage to Jerusalem; while some, who were compelled to remain at home, were beginning to dress their green bowers, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to collect branches from the adjacent country, to decorate their tabernacles in the valleys around the city; Helon returned to his friends in the house of Iddo. He said nothing of what had passed, but they all perceived immediately that he was become a new man. He embraced Sulamith with pure affection, and a humble consciousness of his past injustice; his manner towards all around was full of mild benevolence. There was none of the outward warmth and vehemence of manner which he had exhibited before, yet his mind was full of activity and joy. The calm composure of his whole demeanor was that of a man to whom the mysteries of life are solved, and who feels that omnipotent love defends and guides him through time and eternity. His thoughts and desires seemed all directed towards an invisible, eternal, future good; and yet never had his heart been more open to all the joys of nature, or more susceptible to the tenderest feelings of human affection. Sulamith had never loved him so much, nor ever been so beloved by him. The true happiness of her married life now began; all that had passed was in the strictest sense forgotten. She bloomed again, in more than her former beauty, like the rose of Jericho, when the morning sun drinks from its fragrant leaves the heavy dew which had weighed them down.

On the thirteenth day of the month Tisri, the companies of pilgrims began to arrive from every side. The native of Lebanon, the inhabitant of Beersheba, of Peræa, and Galilee, those that dwell on the seashore, and the stranger from Syria, Asia Minor, Cyprus, and Lybia, after their toilsome journeys, greeted the temple and city of their God. From the roof of Iddo's house, Helon and Sulamith looked down on the festal throng.

The sight which they witnessed on the following day, the day of the preparation for the festival, was peculiar to the precincts of Jerusalem. The courts of the temple, all the roofs of the houses, the mount of Olives, as far as its highest pinnacle, the valley of the Kedron, and the whole environs of the city were covered with a sudden verdure. The gardens and fields had already assumed the yellow hue of autumn, but the palms, the firs, the myrtles, and the pomegranates had been compelled to yield their more durable foliage for this occasion. The whole neighborhood was parched by the heat of the sun, and the vineyards had been already stripped, but at once spring and summer appeared to return with all their variety of colors. The busy hands of men and women were everywhere in full activity, the children waited on the builders, and, as if by magic, Jerusalem seemed all at once filled and encircled by an encampment of green bowers, a lively and refreshing contrast to the mournful barrenness of the hills which were in the distance of the picture.

By evening all was ready. The citrons and apples of Paradise glowed amidst the dark green of the bowers, their walls were hung with tapestry and their floors covered with carpets, and the large lamp burnt in the middle. When the evening star appeared in heaven above the western sea, every family, after the customary ablutions, left its dwelling to occupy its tabernacle. Iddo had resigned his house to strangers, and had erected himself a tabernacle in a vineyard on the mount of Olives, to which he and the family of Selumiel repaired, and placed themselves around the richly furnished

table. He prayed, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, thou king of the earth, who hast sanctified us by thy precepts and commanded us to dwell in tabernacles." He then emptied the cup, the rest followed his example: and the same thing was done almost at the same instant in the surrounding tabernacles. The thousands of lamps in the bowers on the mount of Olives, in the vale of Kedron, and on the roofs of the houses in the city, seemed like stars of the earth, answering to those by which the heavens were already overspread. A gentle wind just stirred the leaves of the bowers, and the sounds of festivity and mutual congratulation echoed on every side, amidst songs and the music of cymbals and aduffes. Well may they rejoice whose sins are removed: if the people afflicted themselves before the atonement was made, it was natural that after it they should indulge in the mirth of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Towards midnight the lamps were gradually extinguished, and all was silent in the tabernacles. The women, the children, and the weakly persons returned to their houses, and the men laid themselves down to rest on the floor. But scarcely had the first beams of morning reddened the summits of the Arabian hills, when they all left their bowers to fill the courts of the temple. The usual ceremonies of extinguishing the lamps, killing the lamb, burning incense in the holy place, and offering the morning-sacrifice, were first gone through. The eight priests then ranged themselves on the sloping ascent of the altar, each with that part of the sacrificial instruments which was intrusted to his care, the last being he who bore the golden vessel with the wine of the drink-offering. At once all the instruments of music struck up together, the Water-gate was opened, and through its lofty folding-doors a priest entered with a golden ewer full of water which he had drawn from the spring of Siloah, whose softly flowing stream runs at the southeastern foot of mount Moriah. All was silent, except the sound of the silver trumpets. The people made a wide opening for the priest, who approached the

altar of burnt-offering and was met by him who bore the vessel of wine. As soon as they saw each other they both exclaimed, "With joy we draw water from the wells of salvation;"* and the people around repeated, "With joy we draw water from the wells of salvation." The priest who had descended from the altar then took from the other the ewer of water, and mingled it with the wine. The Hallel was sung in the mean time by the Levites, the people who filled the courts holding a citron in the one hand and a bundle of palm, willow, and citron branches in the other.

This was the solemnity of which it was commonly said in Israel, "He who has not seen the joy of the drawing of water has seen no joy." Helon regarded it as not only an expression of thankfulness for the early and the latter rain, to which the fruits of the earth now gathered in had owed their abundance, but as a memorial of the water which gushed forth in the wilderness at the stroke of Moses' rod; besides that still higher meaning which it remained for the Messiah fully to disclose.

The special offering of this day,† consisting of thirteen bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year, with their meat-offering and drink-offering, and a goat for a sin-offering. On this day priests of all the courses were on duty, and at least four hundred and sixtyfour. A multitude of Levites, skilful in their art were disposed on the fifteen steps, and the great Hallel was sung by them and the assembled myriads of the people. When they came to the Hosanna in the 118th Psalm the people and priests moved around the altar, imitating the journey of Israel through the wilderness, holding, as before, a citron in one hand and a bundle of palm and myrtle branches in the other, repeating, "O Lord, help, O Lord, grant success." As they passed the high-priest, they showered the fragrant leaves and fruit upon him, heaping the choice gifts of the earth upon the person of highest sanctity

* Isaiah, xii. 3. † Numb. xxix. 12.

among the people. To the worshippers in general this solemnity combined a grateful acknowledgment of the gift of the fruits of the earth, with a memorial of the most important event in the history of God's chosen people. But Helon looked forward to a time when all the promises of Jehovah should be fulfilled, and when to the shouts of Hosanna should be added "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

When the circuit of the altar was completed, and the high-priest from the summit of the fifteen steps had given his benediction to the people, one part of them presented their own thank-offerings, another repaired to the porticoes, to hear the law read and expounded.* In the sabbatical year the whole law was read at the Feast of Tabernacles.†

Immediately after the evening-sacrifice, when the water of Siloah had been again mingled with the wine of the drink-offering, the multitude crowded to the court of the Women, which was illuminated by lamps of unusual size, disposed on four candelabra, fifty cubits in height. The Levites with their instruments stood on the fifteen steps, which led from the court of the Women to the court of Israel, and from the galleries over the porticoes the women were spectators of what passed below. The members of the Sanhedrim, the elders and chief men of the people took torches in their hands, sung psalms, and performed sacred dances, in honor of Jehovah; the youths displayed feats of corporeal strength and dexterity; and the festal assemblage did not disperse till a late hour of the night.

The feast lasted eight days: in the first seven the ceremonies of the commencement were repeated, but with this difference, the number of bullocks for the burnt-offering was diminished by one every day,‡ and in the six following days civil occupations might be pursued, which were forbidden on the first. The traffic, which took place at all the great festivals, was especially active at this time. The curious productions of Egypt, the imports and manufactures of Tyre,

* Neh. viii. 18. † Deut. xxxi. 10, 11. ‡ Numb. xxix.

the spices of the east, the balsam of Gilead, and the corn and cattle of Galilee, were bartered or sold; and every one purchased what was necessary against the approaching season of winter. Helon, however, had no pleasure in seeing what he considered as a profanation of the house of God, and withdrew from the sight of it to pass his days in the tabernacle of Iddo, on the mount of Olives. On the third day he presented his thank-offering, which was truly to him what its name implied, an offering of peace. While Sulamith was engaged in preparing the meal from that part of the victim which belonged to the offerer, Helon availed himself of the permission which the priests enjoyed on festival days, to go into the holy place and see its magnificence.

Only the foot of a priest might enter the holy place; into the holy of holies none but the high-priest's, and that only once in the year, on the day of atonement. What gave a higher interest to the indescribable feelings which occupied Helon's mind, as he stood before the veil of the holiest place, was the company of the old man of the temple, who had dissuaded him from entering on the festival of Pentecost, promising to be his guide at the Feast of Tabernacles. He had prepared himself and Helon by a long and fervent prayer. The old man manifested an unusual degree of emotion. On ordinary occasions, the frame of his mind seemed equally removed from grief and joy, from emotion and apathy; but now he was visibly agitated, and his venerable form seemed to acquire a supernatural dignity from the feeling with which he labored. In passing through the sacred building profound silence was always observed; but when they returned from it he still remained silent; and Helon, much as he wished to ask him questions respecting the import of all he saw, durst not speak to him while he saw him in this mood. The old man led him to Solomon's porch, where he had received him on the first evening, and pointed with his right hand to the courts of the temple which were within their view. After a long silence, during which he was strongly agitated, he said,

"Kneel down, my son! I will give thee my blessing. I promised thy father and thy uncle to do for thee what I have done: I am hastening to where they already are; may we meet there again! Jehovah has guided thee by my means; be thine own spirit henceforth thy guide; for thou wilt see me no more on earth." Helon, astonished and overpowered, sunk upon the ground and received the old man's blessing; and while he lay weeping on the earth, he had disappeared. Helon went to his cell; it was open, but there was no man within. He hastened to Selumiel, who told him that the old man often disappeared for a long time together, and that his words were always true.

They returned together after the meal to Iddo's tabernacle on the mount of Olives. When they had seated themselves, the figure of a stranger appeared among them, whom they did not at first recognise. It was Myron. In the first moment of their surprise they seemed doubtful how to act; Iddo was inclined to thrust him out by force; when Myron, whose pale face and shrunk figure had prevented their knowing him at first, exclaimed, "Let Helon decide!" He turned to him and said; "On the day when my foolish thoughtlessness a second time gave a wound to the happiness of your life, I fled into the wilderness of Judah. A priest found me wandering, brought me back to Jerusalem, and received me hospitably. He told me what had befallen you; and I testified to him my deep remorse and penitence. He seized the opportunity to persuade me to abandon the fables and follies of the religion in which I had been brought up, and to turn to the worship of the one true God. This evening an aged and venerable man entered the house of my host, and bade me seek thee out, and tell thee, in his name, that thou shouldest receive me not only into thy friendship, but into thy faith. Behold me ready to become a proselyte!"

"This," said Helon, "must be the old man of the temple; his word shall be obeyed." He embraced the friend of his youth, and begged him to forgive his groundless suspicions.

"O," said he, "had Elisama but lived to see this day! He had always hoped that thou wouldest be one of us. Did I not too always predict, that if thou shouldest see Israel in all its glory in the Land of Promise, thou wouldest desire to become a partaker in their hopes?" "The God who made heaven and earth hath done this," said Myron; "he has severely punished my folly, and in the midst of my chastisement made me to know your law and your hopes. I now understand why in every land I have found prophecies which pointed to Judea for their accomplishment."

"Praised be Jehovah," exclaimed Iddo, "who increaseth his people Israel, and hath spoken by his prophet the word of which this day we behold the accomplishment, 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of Jehovah riseth upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness thy people: but Jehovah shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light.'"*

Iddo and the priest with whom Myron had lodged endeavored to prevail on him, by submitting to circumcision, to become one of the family of Abraham and an heir of its promises, after which, on the offering of three turtle-doves, he would become a proselyte of righteousness, and be permitted to bring his sacrifice, like a native Jew, into the court of the priests. Myron was more inclined to become only a proselyte of the gate; and Helon took his part, and asked what more was necessary, since he could thus enjoy the benefits of the law, could partake in all the civil privileges of Israel, and dwell in their gates?

On the following morning they conducted Myron before the tribunal which sat in the gate of Nicanor. In the presence of three witnesses, Helon, Selumiel, and the priest his host, he solemnly abjured idolatry, professed his belief in all the truths which are revealed in the law, and promised obedience to the seven Noachic precepts, as they were called; namely, to abstain from idolatry, to worship only the true

* Isaiah, lx. 1.

God, to avoid incest, not to commit theft, or robbery, or murder, to maintain judgment and justice, and to abstain from blood and all that contained blood, consequently from things strangled. He then presented his offering, but he was not allowed to come any further than to the enclosure between the court of the Gentiles and the court of Israel. From this time he bore the name of a devout man, one that feared God, a stranger or proselyte of the gate.

As Helon and Myron spent the last day but one of the feast in Iddo's tabernacle on the mount of Olives, Helon read to him the description which Nehemiah gives of the first celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles after the captivity.*

"Bless Jehovah," said Helon, "that thou hast returned at last to the true source; and pray to him that all the heathen may come to draw from it. The advent of the Messiah, who shall accomplish this, cannot be far distant. He shall be the light of the Gentiles and the consolation of Israel. The sceptre is already departed from Judah† and is in the hand of Levi; and the seventy weeks of Daniel are hastening to their close."

The friends embraced each other, and descending from the mount of Olives, Helon went up to the altar in the temple.

The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles was the most joyous of all.‡ The drawing of the water, the Hosanna, the nightly illumination and dance had been repeated every day; the seventh day was called the great Hosanna and the day of Willows. The altar of burnt-offering was decked with branches of willow, all bent inwards, as an emblem that earthly glory must bow before the majesty of God. Instead of once, the people went seven times around the altar with their branches and their citrons. The last meal was taken

* Neh. viii. 13.

† Gen. xlix. 10.

‡ It was on the eighth and great day of this feast, that Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.—John vii. 37.

in the tabernacles, whose green decorations had already begun to fade; but to the freshness which had charmed the eye when the feast began, succeeded the mind's remembrance of seven happy days which had been passed in them. The father of the family pronounced the blessing over the last cup of wine which they were to drink here, and when it was emptied, gave his benediction to the company, who left the tabernacle with that melancholy with which we quit a spot where we have enjoyed much happiness. The women and children, and even Myron and Helon, carried away a citron, a pomegranate, a branch, or a leaf, as a memorial of the festival. In the evening the illumination and the dance as before described were repeated. This part of the festivities, as well as the drawing of the water, ceased on the eighth day, which was added as a special sabbath to the full week of the feast. On this day no circuit was made around the altar, and the offering consisted only of one bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of a year old, as a burnt-offering, with their usual meat and drink offerings, and a goat for a sin-offering. Besides Azareth, Day of Convocation, it was called the Day of Rejoicing in the Law, because every year on this day the reading of the law and the prophets ended, and began afresh on the following sabbath. Thus what every one had begun in his own synagogue at home, he completed here in the midst of the assembled people. This took place on the twenty-second day of the month, in which, up to this point, there had been only four common days.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

The tabernacles were broken up, and only the scattered leaves, flowers, and fillets testified that they had been. The pilgrims were preparing for their departure, and exchanging their farewell salutations. Many took leave of Jerusalem never to behold it again. The autumn wind blew chill, and where a solitary tabernacle still remained as a monument of the festival, its green was changed to an autumnal yellow. The circle of the Jewish feasts was closed, the half year of harvest was at an end, and the dark and rainy season o winter was fast approaching, when no pilgrim's song was heard on the roads to Jerusalem; a winter which to many would prove the winter of death.

The companies of travellers arranged themselves for their departure. Selumiel and his family, with Myron and Iddo, took the road by Bethany to Jericho. As they passed through the hollow between the southernmost and the middle summit of the mount of Olives, Helon thought of the tears which he had shed on that spot at Pentecost, when he exclaimed, "The path of obedience is difficult." Now returning a happy husband, with the peace of God in his heart, he was inclined to say, "Easy is the path of obedience to him who walks in it with faith." They halted at noon at the Oasis, beneath the palms, and arrived late in the evening at Jericho. On the following day the Galileans crossed the Jordan on their return home.

Helon, Sulamith, and Myron began to make preparations for their departure to Alexandria, from which they were to fetch the mother of Helon. When they were about to begin their journey symptoms of the plague showed themselves at Jericho. This is the most terrific of all diseases, as rapid in its operation as the leprosy is slow, and producing an equally

miserable death. Those who are seized with it are suddenly attacked by pains in the head and loins; the speech becomes inarticulate, and not unfrequently is lost altogether, as well as the sense of hearing. The eyes become dull and heavy; lethargy succeeds, the strength is prostrated, fever, delirium, and melancholy seize the sufferer, and he commonly dies on the third day, unless a plague-boil preserves him for a miserable existence. If the disease spreads, all intercourse is at an end. The streets, the fountains, and the houses are heaped with dead; infected persons are abandoned by their nearest relatives; and despair and licentiousness walk hand in hand. The people call the plague the arrows of God.

As the plague commonly rages most destructively on its first breaking out, Selumiel considered this circumstance as a divine warning to withdraw from Jericho with his whole family, and go into Egypt. Preparations were speedily made, friends and household were commended to Jehovah, and the city of palms abandoned as if a curse were upon it. They hastened by Bethel, Gibeon, and Lydda, to Joppa, where Helon's host was requested to procure for them, as speedily as possible, an opportunity of sailing to Alexandria in a Phœnician ship.

Helon looked from the heights of Joppa to the hills of Judah, and blessed the beloved land which had been to him not only a land of promise but a land of fulfilment. The image of his pious mother, all whose expectations he was about to accomplish and surpass, her joy at seeing him again, and the prospect of returning to the land of her fathers and visiting the grave of her husband, her blessing bestowed on him and Sulamith — all these things occupied his mind with delightful anticipations.

His host seemed uneasy. Helon supposed he might apprehend that they had brought infection with them, and might communicate it, and he hastened to set him at ease on this point. His host shook his head in answer to Helon's assurances, and looked sorrowfully at him. At length he

said, "It is not to myself but thee that my grief relates. Collect all thy firmness; in vain dost thou go to Alexandria to bring back thy mother. She is dead! The tidings of the death of Elisama and the rumor of thy wife's unfaithfulness reached her together, and her heart broke with its double weight of sorrow."

Sulamith uttered a piercing shriek, and Myron wept in grief and shame. Helon felt what an affectionate child feels when bereaved of a mother, but he knew that the hand of Jehovah guided him; that the Lord woundeth, but also healeth; that his ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. "Comfort me, O Jehovah," he exclaimed, his eyes raised to heaven, "comfort me as one is comforted by his mother!" Then seating himself in a corner he gave vent to those tears which soften the anguish of the heart to a tender sorrow.

It was determined, notwithstanding this intelligence, that they should continue their voyage to Alexandria, where Helon's presence was necessary. Selumiel with his wife, his son, his daughter-in-law, and his grandson, Helon, Sulamith, Sallu, and Myron, embarked on board a Phœnician vessel. They ran swiftly along the coast, and Jamnia, Ashdod, Ascalon, Gaza, and Raphia were soon left behind. The mind of Helon was as clear and calm as the mirror in which the sea reflected the bright blue heavens. His grief for the death of his mother had only increased his trust in the Divine compassion, which had bestowed on him that perfect peace of mind, which neither in death nor life sees anything to fear. One morning they were watching the broad red dawn announcing the approach of day. All were in an unusual frame of mind. Helon, full of tranquil joy, was relating to his friends, as they sat around him on the deck, the course of Divine Providence with respect to him in the year that was just completed, and how it had conducted him to that true peace which he had sought in vain before: "I could call upon the whole world,

Praise Jehovah, all the world,
Serve Jehovah with joy!
Come into his presence with rejoicing,
Confess that Jehovah is God.
He has made us and we are his,
His people and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
His courts with songs of praise.
Bless him, praise his name!
For Jehovah is good, his mercy is everlasting,
And his faithfulness from generation to generation.—Ps. c.

"And through all the vicissitudes of my life, in calamity and in death, these words shall be my comfort, which the last of the prophets spoke, when the oracle of prophecy was about to be closed in silence:

The Lord whom ye seek will come speedily to his temple,
And the Angel of the Covenant whom ye desire,
Behold he cometh, saith Jehovah of Hosts."*

While he thus spoke, delightful anticipations of futurity seemed to take possession of his soul. All who sat around him were silent; for the power of his faith seemed to communicate itself, by an indescribable operation, to their minds. All at once, confused voices exclaimed throughout the ship, A storm, a storm! The heavens grew black with clouds, the tempest rose, and the waves beat on every side of the ship. They endeavored to avoid the shore, which was rocky and produced breakers which threatened every moment to overwhelm the vessel. The Phœnician mariners called on their gods, the children of Israel prayed to Jehovah. Helon stood in the midst of threatening waves and terrified men, tranquil and full of confidence. At once the ship received a violent shock, and sprung a leak. Their efforts were in vain. Sulamith flew to Helon's arms, and each repeated to the other passages from the Psalms. All hope of safety was at an end, and sounds of terror and lamentation were heard on every

* Mal. iii. 1.

side. Suddenly, the ship struck violently upon a rock and went to pieces. The crew sunk, and no one could bid another farewell. Helon supported himself for a short time upon a plank, and looking round saw Sulamith and her father sink. Alone, and scarcely conscious, he struggled for a few moments with the stormy waves. One of tremendous height came rolling onward; Helon exclaimed amidst the uproar of the elements,

> "The Angel of the Covenant—
> Behold he cometh, saith Jehovah of Hosts,"

and was buried in the waters.

After an hour the storm had ceased. And the storms of this world, too, had ceased for those who had found death in the waves, and life in the bosom of their God.

244.1 ~~296~~

Strauss, F. St 82 Es ~~St 86~~

Helon's pilgrimage

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